BS"D
April 28, 2023
Friday is 22nd day of the Omer

Potomac Torah Study Center
Vol. 10 #27, April 28, 2023; 2, 7 Iyar 5783; Achrei Mot/Kedoshim 5783

NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z"l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning more than 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his untimely death.

Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from www.PotomacTorah.org. Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.

Google defines the chiastic structure of the Torah as "a literary device in which a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated in reverse order." This pattern, which we find repeatedly in the Torah, focuses on the center, which contains the most significant idea of the chiasm. In this structure, we would expect the very center of the Torah to present its most significant message. Achrei Mot and Kedoshim are at the center of Vayikra, the third and center Sefer of the Torah. If this double parsha is so important, why is each parsha so short that we read them together the same week except during a leap year (when the year consists of 13 rather than 12 months)? One reason could be that the Torah does not waste words, and it can present significant lessons in very few words. Perhaps the concepts in Achrei Mot and Kedoshim are also so closely related that they fit very well together.

One climax in the Torah must certainly be the service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur afternoon, the one time during the year when he may safely enter the Holy of Holies, behind the curtain surrounding the Aron Kodesh, where the cloud of Hashem covers the Holy Ark. The Kohen Gadol, after extensive and detailed preparation, brings his incense pan, and the smoke of his pan rises up and mingles with Hashem's cloud. This mingling is a time when the human world (the Kohen Gadol's fire and cloud) mixes with God's world (Hashem's cloud) – and the human is able to survive (Vayikra chapter 16). For any other human, or at any other time of the year (or without the Kohen Gadol's very detailed and exact preparation), the human could not survive this intimate contact with God.

A repeating theme in the Torah since Adam and Chava in Gan Eden has been what humans lost when God banned them from the garden. Humans since have sought to see God's face, to understand His ways, and to re-establish the connections that we had in Gan Eden. Although Moshe was able to speak directly with God many times, even he could not see God's face (Shemot 33:13-23).

After the intimacy of the Kohen Gadol's approach to God on Yom Kippur, the Torah discusses the sanctity of the souls (blood) of humans and animals (chapter 17) and forbidden sexual/marital relations (chapter 19). Kedoshim follows and opens with God telling Moshe to tell all the people, "You shall be holy, because I Hashem, your God, am holy." After this opening, which many Rabbis have considered the central message of the Torah, Kedoshim contains 51 of the 613 mitzvot in the Torah.

The double parsha for this week therefore contains the service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, the most intimate meeting of a human and God since Gan Eden, and what one might consider the central message of human behavior, dedicating ourselves to emulating Hashem in his holiness.

The generations of the Exodus and of our ancestors who entered Israel lived during a period when God intervened openly in human affairs. The people heard the Revelation at Har Sinai, could see God's cloud leading the camp as the people traveled, and could listen to Moshe as he related what Hashem had just told him. Since approximately the time of Esther

and Mordechai, God has operated Hester Panim, with a hidden face, only behind the scenes rather than openly intervening in human activities. Since that time, it has been our job to look at the world and deduce Hashem's presence.

How are we to develop and maintain our relationship to Hashem when He hides His face? Rabbi Mordechai Rhine looks to the Mishna Berura, which states that we should say each tefillah in the spirit of the Kohen Gadol's Yom Kippur service. By maintaining proper kavanah, we can develop a relationship with Hashem. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks adds that a human created in the image of God must also love humanity as Hashem does – not in the abstract, but in a concrete way. We must love our neighbor and strangers and help them out of love. Rav Kook reminds us that tzedakah comes from tzedek (justice). One who does not give tzedakah to the needy is a thief, stealing from what rightfully belongs to the needy. My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, always emphasized the importance of treating others properly and helping those less fortunate than us. His love of Sefer Vayikra matched the love of this Sefer of Rabbis of yeshivot, most of which traditionally started teaching Torah to young children by opening with Sefer Vayikra. Are animal sacrifices and long stretches of laws "boring"? Not if taught properly, with love, something that Rabbis over the years taught to generations of our children.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah and Alan

Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at www.alephbeta.org. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.

Please daven for a Refuah Shlemah for Yoram Ben Shoshana, Leib Dovid ben Etel, Asher Shlomo ben Ettie, Avraham ben Gavriela, Mordechai ben Chaya, Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha; Sharon bat Sarah, Noa Shachar bat Avigael, Kayla bat Ester, and Malka bat Simcha, who need our prayers. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah & Alan

Acharei Mos – Shock Treatment

By Rabbi Label Lam © 5776

> *And HASHEM spoke to Moshe after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they drew near before the HASHEM, and they died.* (Vayikra 16:1)

Why is mentioning the death of the two sons of Aaron a fitting introduction to the laws of Yom Kippur and entry of the Kohen Gadol into the Holy of Holies? Rashi explains that it is a strong warning to deter anyone from entering the domain of the holy in a prohibited way. The verse is cautioning even seekers of the sublime from rushing in where angels fear to tread. It is an absolutely dangerous move without any margin of error or allowance for favoritism.

According to Rashi, the ordinary amongst us are officially cautioned not to enter where we do not belong. What about the Kohen Gadol and his ilk?! What does the mention of the death of Aaron's sons do for them? Why is it an intro to the laws of Yom Kippur, in general?

Now more than a month ago, right before Purim, I was happily treated to a string of late nights followed by early mornings. My daughter was getting engaged and the L'Chaim was on a Sunday night. Monday morning I was back at work. Monday night was the Vort! It was another lovely but late night event, and again I was back at it with a few hours of sleep. That Tuesday afternoon I received a call from Rabbi Zacharia Wallerstein. He asked me if I could sub for his Tuesday evening class at Ohr Yitzchok. That night was Taanis Esther and the next day was a half day in Yeshiva, and so I agreed to drive to Brooklyn after work to give a 10:30 PM Shiur. I knew I was setting myself up for another day, a fast day "running on empty."

I was preparing a fiery piece of Sefas Emes when 10:30 passed by without a single soul entering the room. At 10:40 a middle aged gent sauntered in and sat a few rows away. I warmly welcomed him. Inwardly, admittedly, I was wrestling whether or not I should bother to deliver a class. Maybe I was too embarrassed to excuse myself or maybe he looked like he was hungry, so we jumped in. It was awesome! We prepared for Purim with all the bluster I could muster. After 50 minutes, we both felt we had eaten a big Torah meal. We walked out together exchanging pleasantries.

Rabbi Wallerstein called to find out how the Shiur was, and "how many people" were there. Not wanting to break the news all at once, I told him a story about a preacher who had a lone farmer in the audience when he was ready to give his sermon. He told the farmer, "No speech today!" The farmer retorted, "If I went to the field and saw one horse, wouldn't I feed him?!" Getting the hint, he launched into a 45 minute fury or fire and brimstone and looked to the farmer for approval. The farmer tells the preacher, "If I went into the field and saw only one horse, do you think I would dump the whole truck load of hay for him?!" Rabbi Wallerstein was astonished, "One person!?" I told him that I dumped the whole truck load of hay!

Two weeks later on a Tuesday morning, Rabbi Wallerstein calls me again. This time he tells me that the fellow who came that night never missed a class. The next week he was sick, and they said the Shiur for a Refua Shleima. "This morning he had a massive heart attack and died. I am at his Levaya now! Your Shiur was his very last!" I was stunned!

What a sobering thought! You never know when you might find yourself standing like the Kohen Gadol inside the Holy of Holies or beyond, in front of HASHEM. How does one get ready for that inevitability of all inevitabilities? Yom Kippur and the Kodesh Kedoshim are models of that ultimate birthing process -- "Teshuvah." The best preparation to successfully enter that ultimate realm might be a **shock treatment!**

Good Shabbos!

https://torah.org/torah-portion/dvartorah-5776-achareimos/

The Universality of the Mitzvah of Kedusha

by Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah © 2011

The portion of Kedoshim opens with an all-embracing imperative: *"Holy shall you be, for I, the Lord your God, am holy"* (Lev. 19:2). The command to be holy is all-embracing in two senses: it applies to all people and it applies in all situations.

The Book of Vayikra focuses primarily on the holiness of the Tabernacle and the Kohanim, the priests. The Tabernacle is holy because God "dwells" in it, and the Kohanim are holy because they have been designated to officiate in the Temple and devote their lives to serving God and the Israelite people in this capacity. It would be reasonable to conclude, then, that holiness is limited to this one place and this one group of people. The Torah tells us here that this is not the case:

> *"Holy shall you – each and every one of you – be, for I the Lord your God am holy. I am not merely the God of the Temple, I am God of the world. I am not merely the God of the priests, I am the God of all of you."*

The purpose of the Temple was not to limit God's presence but to highlight it: *"You shall build me a Temple, and I will dwell in your midst"* (Ex. 25:7) – note that God dwells not in the Temple, but in *"our midst*" – among the entire nation and

in the innermost midst of each individual. When God's presence is palpably felt in the Temple, we become sensitized to God's presence in all places. Through granting a special sanctity to the Kohanim, God gives us regular, concrete examples of human sanctity. These Kohanim can then serve as models to us in our own travels on the path towards holiness. We too often attempt to proscribe and compartmentalize God and holiness. Religion is something we do only in the synagogue, or only the job of rabbis, we say. To this the Torah responds: It is true that the Temple is holy and the priests are holy. But what is the purpose of such holiness? That I, God, may dwell in your midst. That you, the Jewish people, shall be holy, each and every one of you.

This mitzvah of holiness is universal in another sense. It applies in all situations. It is the spirit that gives life to the body of the Torah – the mitzvot. The mitzvot are the concrete embodiment of the values and beliefs of the Torah. But as concrete, finite laws they cannot address all situations. Moreover, performed just as laws, with no sense as to their purpose and inner essence, they are robbed of their vitality and become lifeless, inert shells. The Torah here commands us not to fool ourselves into believing that we can live a religious life just by following the mitzvot. To truly serve God means to be religious – to be God-oriented – and not just to be observant. This God-orientation is the commandment to be *"Holy, for I the Lord your God am holy"* – to direct all of one's actions as a way of being close to God and of imitating God.

This religious striving will inform not only one's performance of the mitzvot, but all of one's actions. Without such orientation one might perform all the mitzvot but remain, in Nachmanides' term, a *'degenerate within the bounds of the Torah.*' With such an orientation, not only will one perform the mitzvot better, but one will become the type of person that the Torah demands him or her to be: a holy person.

We cannot do away with the mitzvot and focus on their values alone, because the mitzvot are the necessary expression of these values and the only way that these values can be lived, experienced, and internalized. But it is just as true that we cannot do away with the values and limit our religious life to one of mere observance. We cannot ignore the mitzvah of holiness that informs all the mitzvot and all of life. We, as Jews, must strive to be religious, as well as observant. We must strive to be holy, holy individuals and a holy nation, *"because I the Lord your God am holy."*

Shabbat Shalom!

https://library.yctorah.org/2011/04/the-universality-of-the-mitzvah-of-kedusha/

Thoughts for Aharei Mot/Kedoshim

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

The Sifra on Vayikra 19:18 records a debate between Rabbi Akiva and Ben Azzai. Rabbi Akiva states that the verse*, "and you shall love your neighbor as yourself"* is a great principle of the Torah. Ben Azzai, while agreeing with Rabbi Akiva's basic point, suggests that another verse contains an even greater principle of Torah: *zeh sefer toledot adam, zeh kelal gadol mizeh (This is the book of the generations of man – this is an even greater principle)*. This verse, drawn from Parashat Bereishith, includes the words that God created human beings in His image. Thus, we are called upon to respect all human beings – regardless of their particular backgrounds. Ben Azzai, is offering a universal vision of inclusiveness and commitment to humanity in general, not just to our own friends and neighbors. This is an even greater principle than loving one's neighbor as oneself, in the sense that it enlarges our perspective, and helps us view ourselves as part of the greater human family.

But how do we balance the particular commitment to our family and faith with a recognition of the universal value of all human beings?

Some years ago, I read a parable in the writings of Dr. Pinchas Polonsky that helped me clarify my thinking. Imagine that you have carefully studied a painting day after day, year after year. You know every brush-stroke, color, shadow… you know every detail of the painting and you understand it to the extent humanly possible. And then, one day someone comes along and turns on the light. You then realize that the painting you had studied to perfection is actually part of a much larger canvas. As you stand back, you realize that you need to re-evaluate your thinking. The segment of the

canvas that you have studied all these years has not changed; you still know every detail; it is still absolutely true. Yet, you must now study your truth in context of a much larger canvas.

Each faith, at its best, has a very true understanding of its piece of the larger canvas. But when the lights go on, each faith must come to realize that it represents part of the picture but not the whole picture. A grand religious vision must necessarily entail a grand perception of God: God is great enough to create and love all human beings. God sees the whole canvas of humanity in its fullness.

One of the great challenges facing religions is to see the entire picture, not just our particular segment of it. While being fully committed to our faiths, we also need to make room for others. We need, in a sense, to see humanity from the perspective of God, to see the whole canvas not just individual segments of it.

Religious vision is faulty when it sees one, and only one, way to God. Religious vision is faulty when it promotes forced conversions, discrimination against "infidels," violence and murder of those holding different views. How very tragic it is that much of the anti-religious persecution that takes place in our world is perpetrated by people who claim to be religious, who claim to be serving the glory of God.

While religion today should be the strongest force for a united, compassionate and tolerant humanity, it often appears in quite different garb. Religion is too often identified with terrorism, extremism, superstition, exploitation…and hypocrisy. People commit the most heinous crimes…and do so while claiming to be acting in the name of God.

The authentic religious voice should be one that fosters mutual understanding; we should remind ourselves and our fellow religionists that God loves all human beings and wants all human beings to be blessed with happy and good lives. There is room for all of us on this earth. We need to foster a religious vision that is humble, thoughtful, and appreciative of the greatness of God.

* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

The Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals has experienced a significant drop in donations during the pandemic. The Institute needs our help to maintain and strengthen our Institute. Each gift, large or small, is a vote for an intellectually vibrant, compassionate, inclusive Orthodox Judaism. You may contribute on our website jewishideas.org or you may send your check to Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, 2 West 70th Street, New York, NY 10023. Ed.: Please join me in helping the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals at this time.

https://www.jewishideas.org/article/thoughts-aharei-motkedoshim

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Mazel-Tov to Rabbi Marc D. Angel!

Rabbi Marc D. Angel is among those to be inducted into the Manhattan Jewish Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Manhattan on May 9, 2023. Advance reservations are requested from those who wish to attend the event. When reserving, please indicate that you are doing so as a guest of Rabbi Angel.

Some Thoughts on the Role of Judaism in the State of Israel

By Warren Zev Harvey *

What does it mean to say that the State of Israel is the "State of the Jews" or, more accurately, the "Jewish State"? The State's Declaration of Independence defines it as a "Jewish State." It goes on to promise that "it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel," "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex," and "guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture." I read these words as meaning: Since our State is a Jewish state based on the vision of our Prophets, it

guarantees liberty and equality to all its citizens. In other words, the Jewishness of the State guarantees its liberal democratic commitment. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos mean democracy.

Israel is the State of all its citizens, Jews and non-Jews. It is thus awkward to speak of it as “the State of the Jews,” for this phrase may be misconstrued to mean that a Jew in Brooklyn or Antwerp is more of an Israeli than a Muslim in Kafr Qara, a Christian in Nazareth, or a Druze in Daliyat al-Karmel. The phrase could be justified by saying that it means only that all Jews should consider Israel to be their cultural center, as it is written “for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3). Nonetheless, it is less confusing to speak of a “Jewish State,” as did the Declaration of Independence. Moreover, the State is constitutionally defined as “Jewish” in its Basic Laws (Human Dignity and Liberty, 1992; Freedom of Occupation, 1994; cf. The Knesset, amendment, 1985). But in what sense is it Jewish?

In terms of numbers, Israel today has almost 8 million citizens, roughly three-quarters of whom are Jewish. If one includes the Arabs living in Judea, Samaria, the Golan Heights, and the Gaza Strip, then Israel has almost 12 million subjects, but only about half are Jewish. It goes without saying that if Israel loses its Jewish majority, it will be difficult for it to remain a Jewish State in any meaningful sense. This demographic consideration will have to be taken into account when Israel negotiates its permanent borders with its neighbors. However, I am not concerned here with demography, but with content. In what respects should the State privilege or advance Jewish content?

Certainly the State’s laws must not discriminate in any way between Jew and non-Jew, since the Declaration of Independence guarantees “complete equality” to all citizens. The Law of Return (1950) might be considered an exception to this. However, it does not discriminate between citizens but between applicants for citizenship. Moreover, the Declaration explicitly promises that the State is “open to Jewish immigration.” That promise had at the time of Israel’s birth a vital significance for stateless Holocaust refugees who could then enter the Land as free and enfranchised citizens. Had the State been proclaimed only one decade earlier, who knows how many Jews could have been rescued from the Topheth?

It cannot be overemphasized that the principle of the equality of citizens in the State of Israel is not a grudging compromise that Judaism has made with modern secular ideologies, but it derives from within Judaism — from the vision of its Prophets. Indeed, in the years before the establishment of the State, leading rabbinic authorities, including the illustrious Chief Rabbis Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel and Isaac Halevi Herzog, planned for the future Jewish State to be governed in accordance with Jewish law, and ruled that the halakha ensures the equality of all citizens (see, for example, Rabbi Uziel, Mishpetei Uziel, Hoshen Mishpat, 1940, no. 17; Rabbi Herzog, “Rights of Minorities according to Halakhah,” Tehumin 2 [1981], pp. 169–179).

Unfortunately, the principle of equality has not always been carefully guarded by Israel's Knesset and Supreme Court, especially in the past few years. One example of an infringement upon the principle of equality is the Knesset’s legislation of Hatikvah as the national anthem of Israel in 2004. This stirring poem, written by Naphtali Herz Imber in 1877 (with later revisions by him and others) and put to music by Samuel Cohen in 1888, has been the beloved anthem of the Zionist movement since its early days. It speaks of the age-old yearning of the "soul of the Jew" (nefesh Yehudi) for Zion, and proclaims the Jewish people's desire to be a "free nation in our Land" (`am hofshi beArtsenu). As the anthem of the Zionist movement, it was a superb choice. However, it is not appropriate as the national anthem of the State of Israel, since non-Jewish citizens lack the "soul of the Jew." Even though Hatikvah had always functioned as the Israeli national anthem de facto, its status was not made official until 2004. There had been serious objections to it because of its exclusionary nature and also for other reasons (for example, it’s too secular, too Ashkenazi, and simply anachronistic in speaking of “the hope” of a stateless people). Many alternatives have been suggested to replace it as Israel’s national anthem — including biblical texts, medieval poems by Rabbi Judah Halevi and others, and modern poems by Bialik, Tchernichovsky, Naomi Shemer, and others. It has also been suggested that the melody of Hatikvah be retained but new words substituted. Hatikvah will always be the cherished anthem of the Zionist movement, but the State of Israel deserves an anthem that can be sung with equal commitment and passion by all its citizens.

To be sure, the Declaration of Independence’s guarantee of “freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture” applies not only to Muslims, Christians, Druze, and other non-Jews, but also to Jews. This means that Jewish religious coercion is unacceptable, and Jews may freely pursue all brands of Judaism: Orthodox, Ultra-Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, and the sundry forms of Atheism, Agnosticism, and Secularism. In this connection, it should be mentioned that Israel’s laws concerning personal status (marriage, divorce, conversion, and so

forth), which derive from the old Ottoman millet system, are very problematic, especially as interpreted by a Chief Rabbinate that is increasingly estranged from the people. Rulings of Israeli Rabbinical Courts are often discriminatory against women, converts, and the non-Orthodox. These laws are in need of revision.

The rejection of religious coercion is fundamental to the Zionist project. Zionism, from its beginning, was a political movement, not a religious one. It has always been open to religious and non-religious alike. It is a project of the entire Jewish people, including all groups and sectors, all ideologies and all philosophies, all theologies, and all heresies. Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines, the visionary founder of the Mizrahi faction of Zionism in 1902, explained to his fellow religionists how it was possible that the movement's leader, Theodor Herzl, was not religious. He begins by noting that the great Jewish leaders of yore were all distinguished by their holiness and piety, and then writes: "Yet here we see a political man who has not gone out to meditate in the deserts or forests, who has not sanctified himself by ablutions of the body, who does not adorn himself with prayer shawl and phylacteries, who does not ponder over the divine Torah, who does not afflict his soul by fasting, who has not rolled about in the snow or slept among ants, and who nonetheless is succeeding!" Rabbi Reines asks, "Is this not an astonishing thing?!" And he answers: No, not at all, it is a "very simple thing." It is simple, he explains, because those previous Jewish leaders were spiritual leaders concerned about spiritual redemption, while Herzl is nothing but a political leader concerned about political redemption.

The Zionist movement, continues Rabbi Reines, is not spiritual but "material, economic, and political." It is not a spiritual movement of religious Jews but a political movement of all Jews. It may thus have non-religious leaders, since its policies are to be determined wholly in accordance with material, economic, and political considerations, and not in accordance with spiritual genius or messianic faith (Or Hadash `al Zion, X, 2).

In short, in our desire to cultivate the Jewishness of the State of Israel, we must be careful not to do so at the expense of the equality and liberty of its citizens; and we must remember that many citizens are not Jewish, and many of the Jewish citizens are not religious.

I would like now to say some words about three areas in which the Jewish dimension of the State may be beneficially promoted: (1) the Hebrew language, (2) the Hebrew calendar, and (3) Jewish law.

The Hebrew Language

The revival of Hebrew as the primary spoken language in the Land of Israel is an amazing phenomenon. Israeli children grow up today speaking the language of the Prophets and Sages. They read the Hebrew Bible with a naturalness that is impossible even for learned rabbis in the Diaspora. The treasures of classical Jewish literature are accessible to them in a way they were not accessible to their ancestors who were not native Hebrew speakers. It may be said, with only a modicum of exaggeration, that the most Jewish thing about the State of Israel is its use of the Hebrew tongue. However, mention of the Jewishness of Israeli Hebrew raises a serious question; for contemporary Israeli Hebrew is every day moving further and further away from its biblical, rabbinic, and medieval roots. I just wrote that Israeli children read the Bible in a natural way and the Jewish classics are open before them. While this is still true, it was truer in the past, and becoming less and less true all the time.

Maimonides taught us that the principle for determining correct usage in any language is the practice of its native speakers. Not the grammarians but the native speakers are the authorities on what constitutes proper usage *(Commentary on the Mishnah,* Terumot 1:1). Correct Hebrew is thus determined by its native speakers, the Israelis; and the language of the native speakers is obviously influenced by the speech they have heard and the literature to which they have been exposed. Israelis who have been educated on classical Hebrew literature will speak a Hebrew that is connected to that literature, while those who have not been educated on it will speak a Hebrew disconnected from its roots.

I have been teaching in Israel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem since 1977, when I moved to Israel from North America. Over the years, I have noticed a steep decline in the familiarity of my students with the Hebrew Bible. This decline reflects the progressive neglect of biblical studies in Israeli schools. In response to the dramatic erosion of the ability of young Israelis to comprehend the Hebrew Bible, there is now being published in Israel a "translation" of the Bible into "Israeli Hebrew" by the veteran educator Avraham Ahuvia. The "translation" is known as Tanakh Ram, and thus far

the *Pentateuch* (2008) and *Major Prophets* (2011) have appeared. One may debate the pedagogic value of Ahuvia's "translation," but it cannot be denied that contemporary Israeli Hebrew is undergoing a process of disengagement from classical Hebrew. It is, in other words, undergoing a process of disengagement from Judaism.

I am convinced that contemporary Israeli Hebrew, i.e., what is sometimes called "tzabbarit" or, in the term coined by the poet Avot Yeshurun, "Tel-Avivrit," is still essentially the same language as biblical, rabbinic, and medieval Hebrew. One can still today see an Israeli child pick up a Hebrew Bible and read it fluently and joyfully. I believe the regrettable process of disengagement of Israeli Hebrew from its historic sources can be reversed. All that is needed is a return — even a partial return — to the old Israeli educational ethos, which gave priority to the teaching of the Hebrew Bible and other classical Hebrew texts. Needless to say, I am not talking about theology or ideology, but literature. I am not talking about teaching "Judaism" or "Zionism," but Hebrew and its literature. I'm talking about language.

It is the native speakers, according to Maimonides' principle, who determine the nature of a language. If Israeli children are given a solid education in classical Jewish literature, then their Israeli Hebrew — no matter how vibrant and innovative — will remain Hebrew, that is, it will remain Jewish; and few of them will want a crutch like Tanakh Ram.

The Hebrew Calendar

The public use of the Hebrew calendar in the State of Israel is important, as it provides a temporal Jewish framework for everyday life in the State. The rhythm of the year is that of the Jewish Sabbaths, feasts, and fasts.

The general public day of rest in Israel is the Jewish Sabbath, not Sunday or Friday (although, according to the 1951 law, Muslims and Christians have the right to observe Friday or Sunday). Spring vacation is every year during the week of Passover. The celebration of the New Year occurs in Tishre, not January. Visitors to Israel on the Christian New Year are often surprised to discover it is a regular workday, and those looking for a gala New Year's Eve ball must be content if they can find a little Sylvester party. Hardly anyone in Israel knows that the holiday of Sylvester is named for a fourth-century pope, and many mistakenly associate it with the more famous cartoon cat. In any case, according to the Jewish calendar, the New Year celebrates the Creation of the World, not the birth of Jesus or the hijra of Muhammad. In this sense, the Hebrew calendar is more secular than the Christian or Muslim calendars, since it does not commence with birth or deeds of the founder of a religion but with the beginning of the universe.

In Israel today, the Hebrew calendar is generally used alongside the Christian calendar, sometimes one is preferred and sometimes the other. The Muslim calendar is also used in many contexts. In business letters, it is customary to write both the Hebrew and Christian dates. Similarly, books often give both Hebrew and Christian years on the title page. Academic years at Israeli universities are commonly cited by the Hebrew date alone. This is probably for convenience sake, since the academic year begins right after the holidays of Tishri, and since it is elegantly designated by only one Hebrew year (e.g., 5773) but inelegantly designated by two hyphenated Christian years (e.g., 2012–2013).

The Hebrew calendar thus gives a Jewish rhythm to life in the State. However, some Israeli politicians would like to see the Israeli public calendar brought closer into line with the Christian calendar. For example, some politicians would like the State to adopt a Saturday-Sunday two-day weekend, as in many countries in the Christian West. Other politicians agree that a two-day week-end is desirable, but, sensitive to the interests of the Muslim minority, prefer that it be on Friday and Saturday — and this makes more sense since Friday is already effectively a half-holiday in Israel, with many people either not working or working only part-time.

However, a still better idea was proposed more than four decades ago by Rabbi Norman Lamm in his article, "The Rosh Hodesh Plan" (National Jewish Monthly 85, July–August, 1971, pp. 24–25). He suggested that the first day of each Hebrew month, that is, Rosh Hodesh, be observed in Israel as a legal day of rest. His plan was championed at the time by the then young National Religious MK Zevulun Hammer. According to the Lamm-Hammer initiative, only one day of Rosh Hodesh would be observed as a legal holiday each month, even when Rosh Hodesh is two days. Since Rosh Hodesh sometimes falls on Sabbaths and holidays, the plan would add about seven to nine days of rest each year. If it were decided to have two legal holidays in months when Rosh Hodesh is two days, then it would add 10 to 12 days. It is now time to reconsider the Lamm-Hammer initiative. It would answer the Israelis' desire for more legal days of rest, give new relevance to the ancient Jewish celebration of the New Moon, and enhance the Jewish rhythm of life in the State.

Jewish Law

At the time of the creation of the State of Israel, those who proposed it be governed according to Jewish law offered a simple argument: If Britain is governed by British law and France by French law, then should not the Jewish State be governed by Jewish law? The proposal received some support, but was not adopted. Israeli law was instead concocted out of an ad hoc mixture of British law, Ottoman law, German law, and other diverse elements. Nonetheless, the importance of giving Jewish law — or as it is called in Israel "mishpat `ivri" — a place in the legal system of the Jewish state was recognized by early jurists and politicians, and they appointed leading experts in Jewish law to Israel's Supreme Court: Rabbi Professor Simcha Assaf (appointed 1948), Professor Moshe Zilberg (appointed 1950), and Professor Menachem Elon (appointed 1977). In addition, Chief Justice Haim Cohn (served on the Court, 1960–1981), a skilled talmudist, often cited rabbinic sources in his decisions. In recent years, however, the importance of having major authorities of Jewish law on the Supreme Court has not been widely recognized. One exception to this tendency was Chief Justice Aharon Barak, who in 1994 sought unsuccessfully to appoint the distinguished dayyan Rabbi Shlomo Dichovsky to the Supreme Court as a replacement for the retired Justice Elon.

Today almost no one speaks of the necessity of having experts in Jewish law on the Supreme Court. Instead, it has become fashionable to speak of the "religious seat" or "religious seats" on the Supreme Court. In the elections to the Supreme Court in 2011, Religious Zionist politicians worked very hard to elect a "religious" judge to the court, but, as far as I could see, they made no attempt at all to get an expert in Jewish law elected. The subject apparently did not interest them. As a believer in the enduring value of Jewish law, I would like to see outstanding experts in Jewish law on Israel's Supreme Court — whether or not they are "religious." Truth to tell, I couldn't care less how many "religious" justices are on the court. I have no desire to know which justices don't eat pork, which shut off their computers on the Sabbath, or which fast on Yom Kippur. However, I think it is important that Jewish law have a firm place in Israeli law, and this is only possible if there are men and women in the legal system who are well versed in it — and, in particular, if there are experts in Jewish law on the Supreme Court.

The place of Jewish law in the Israeli legal system was given a formal definition in the 1980 Foundations of the Law Act. According to this document, whenever the courts are in doubt regarding a decision, they shall "decide it in the light of the principles of liberty, justice, equity, and peace of the Jewish heritage [moreshet Yisrael]." This flowery dictum has been interpreted in many ways, but some jurists have seen in it an invitation to make use of Jewish law. Now, whether or not it is an invitation to use Jewish law, it is surely a license to do so; for although it is true that "Jewish heritage" does not necessarily mean Jewish law, it is undeniable that Jewish law is part of the "Jewish heritage."

Let me give one example that illustrates the place of Jewish law in Israel today and the attitudes Israelis have toward it. The example concerns a 1986 law forbidding the public display of hametz on Passover (except in non-Jewish neighborhoods). This law was for years not enforced. However, when in 2001 a religious Interior Minister threatened to enforce it, he stirred up angry opposition. Non-kosher restaurants and food-stores, which legally served non-kosher food all year round, were now suddenly required by law to obey certain particular dietary laws. The requirement seemed at times absurd. For example, Italian eateries that sold pizza pepperoni were told to make it from unleavened dough — the pork and cheese were fine, as long as served on matzah! Many rebelled against the law and ridiculed it. Journalists denounced it as one of the most obnoxious examples of religious coercion in Israel's history, and argued that it discriminated against the non-religious and prevented them from making a fair living. Professors of law argued that it was unconstitutional. Knesset members organized to repeal it. It seemed quite clear that its days were numbered.

Then on Passover 2007, in Jerusalem, special officers raided a grocery store, two restaurants, and a pizzeria, and gave them summonses for selling hametz in public. The case attracted much media attention, and was tried in the Jerusalem court of Judge Tamar Bar-Asher Zaban, who had clerked for Justice Elon on the Supreme Court. Her astute ruling is exemplary for two reasons: first, she succeeded in giving the unreasonable law a new reasonable definition, and thus saved it from being repealed; and second, in redefining the law, she made use of the Talmud and Rashi's Commentary. The judge acquitted the four defendants. Her decision was based on a distinction between two senses of "public," designated by two different Hebrew words: "pumbi" and "tzibburi." The law, she explained, forbids display of hametz "in public" (pumbi), that is, in a place visible to passers-by. A restaurant or food store is "public" (tzibburi) in the sense that it is not private, but not "public" (pumbi) in the sense that passers-by can see what's going on inside. The law, thus, does

not forbid the sale of hametz inside a restaurant or store, but would forbid it on the street in a place visible to passers-by. Supporting her distinction between the two senses of “public,” she cited a 1998 Tel-Aviv case in which a man was acquitted of the charge of committing an indecent act “in public” (pumbi) in a stall of a public rest room, since the stall, although public (tzibburi), was not “public” (pumbi). In order to provide a theoretical basis for her decision, she referred to the talmudic definition of “reshut haRabbim” (“public domain”) in BT Shabbat 6a: “What is reshut haRabbim? A thoroughfare, a big plaza, and alleys open at both sides,” such as, according to Rashi, an intercity highway, an urban market, and streets at least seven meters wide. The judge reasoned: just as not all public roads or markets are considered “reshut haRabbim” by the Talmud, so not all public places are considered “pumbi” by Israeli law.

The hametz law, as now redefined by Judge Bar-Asher Zaban, seems acceptable to most Israelis, and talk of repealing it has ceased. One would think that religious Jews, concerned about preserving the spirit of Passover in the public domain, would have praised the judge’s decision that prevented the law from being repealed. However, the religious politicians and journalists vociferously attacked her for not convicting the four defendants.

The case illustrates how an Israeli judge knowledgeable in Jewish law found a helpful discussion in the Talmud that enabled her to turn an unreasonable law into a reasonable one. It also illustrates that non-religious Israelis, although adverse to religious coercion, are willing to accept laws concerning the public celebration of Jewish holidays, provided they do not impinge on their basic freedoms.

If we want mishpat `ivri to play a meaningful role in Israeli jurisprudence, it is necessary to strengthen its study in Israeli law schools. Judges who have been educated in Jewish law will be able to refer to it when appropriate.

Conclusion

What is the role of Judaism in the State of Israel? It provides the prophetic vision that is at the foundation of the State’s values of justice, liberty, and equality. The Hebrew language spoken by Israelis gives them a uniquely intimate access to the classical texts of Judaism. The Hebrew calendar used in Israel gives a Jewish rhythm to life in the State. Jewish law, when cited in Israeli courts, adds a Jewish dimension to Israeli law. The State must not teach Jewish religion but it must teach Hebrew language and literature — and I believe that if it does that effectively the many and various expressions of Judaism will flourish in it.

* Professor Emeritus in the Department of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This article appears in issue 14 of *Conversations,* the Institute's journal.

https://www.jewishideas.org/article/some-thoughts-role-judaism-state-israel-0

Achrei Mos: Learning the Skill of "I Don’t Know"

by Rabbi Mordechai Rhine *

Each year, anticipation mounted steadily as the day of Yom Kippur neared. The Kohein Gadol was sequestered as he prepared himself in purity, both spiritually and emotionally. For seven days he reviewed the precious order of The Day when he would be invited into the holiest part of the world, the inner chamber of the Beis Hamikdash. There he would stand in front of the Aron in an audience of prayer and service before Hashem. It was an audience of note, on a day known for its awesomeness and sanctity.

What is fascinating is that every Jew can have a taste of that awesome experience every single day of our lives. The Shulchan Aruch)94:1(tells us that when a person recites Shemoneh Esrei, a person should direct their Kavana)intent(to the Kodesh Kadoshim, that holy place that the Kohein Gadol entered on Yom Kippur. The Mishna Berurah)7(adds, “A person should see himself as if he was standing in front of the Aron,” just like the Kohein Gadol did.
Several years ago, I was Rav in a shul that was just starting its shacharis weekday minyan. We had a core group of people that would come every day. But to complete the requisite ten I would invite people from the community to choose one day a week to join the minyan. Many people were very supportive, and it was memorable and invigorating to

introduce so many to the rhythm of attending morning minyan.

There was one particular gentleman who was very excited about my invite. He agreed to come Tuesdays, and for the first time began davening with a minyan. When the weeks preceding Yom Kippur arrived, he was surprised that when he thought davening would end, the congregation didn't seem to be done. He asked me about it, and I explained that during these special weeks we add a chapter from Tehillim that is appropriate for this time of year. He thanked me for the information and seemed satisfied.

A few weeks later, after the holiday season had long passed, I noticed that he was still staying extra time after davening was completed to recite Tehillim, chapter 27. I approached him and said, "Moshe, I'm not sure if you are aware but we only say that during the holiday season." He smiled and assured me that he knew. He explained, "It was so hard for me to keep up with the congregation in saying this added chapter which has words that I am not familiar with. So, I decided to continue saying it for the remainder of the year so that when that season comes again, I will be proficient."

Interestingly, in that chapter of Tehillim we discuss fear and the challenges of life. We say, *"B'Zos,"* in this I trust. The Medrash tells us that this word "B'Zos" is connected to the similar word in this week's Parsha, which says, "B'Zos" in this way shall Aharon enter the inner chamber on Yom Kippur.

Perhaps the Medrash is understanding the words of Tehillim to say, "B'Zos,"— in the power of prayer, which is an audience like that of the Kohein Gadol — I trust. Meaning that just like the Kohein Gadol's service had awesome impact, so, in our own way, can ours. We recognize that our daily prayers are a small sample of the great invitation extended to the Kohein Gadol on Yom Kippur. Every day we are invited to envision ourselves standing as the Kohein Gadol did in front of the Aron, with the Shechina above us)See Ramoh 97:2(.

In fact, in a certain way we have a greater opportunity than the Kohein Gadol. He was literally in the Kodesh Kadoshim and therefore had to be brief in his prayers and in his service. In contrast to his brevity, we can stand in prayer for as long as we'd like,)so long as we are still paying attention(.

I often think back to that congregant who chose so nobly to prepare all year for the Yom Kippur season. He used the year wisely to prepare for Yom Kippur.

Then I think of the words of the Mishna Berura that every Teffila should be said in the spirit of the Kohein Gadol's Yom Kippur service, standing in front of the Aron. The year of the Jew is not just a way to prepare for a meaningful Yom Kippur. The year of the Jew is an opportunity to relive the very holiest experiences of Yom Kippur, as we daven with proper Kavana every day of our lives.

With best wishes for a wonderful Shabbos!

* Rabbi Mordechai Rhine is a certified mediator and coach with Rabbinic experience of more than 20 years. Based in Maryland, he provides services internationally via Zoom. He is the Director of TEACH613: Building Torah Communities, One family at a Time, and the founder of CARE Mediation, focused on Marriage/ Shalom Bayis and personal coaching. To reach Rabbi Rhine, his websites are www.care-mediation.com and www.teach613.org; his email is RMRhine@gmail.com. **For information or to join any Torah613 classes, contact Rabbi Rhine.**

Acharei Mos - Kedoshim -- The Clothes Break the Man

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer*

The beginning of this week's parsha addresses the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Nadav and Avihu. They died after entering the Kodesh Hakadashim, the Holy of Holies, and offering a *ketores* - an incense offering -- which G-d had not commanded. G-d now clarifies for Moshe and Aharon the time and manner when it is appropriate to enter the Kodesh Hakadashim. The High Priest should enter the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, and he should bring the incense offering which is part of the Yom Kippur service. He should not wear the usual eight priestly garments of the High Priest, which

include four golden garments. Instead, he should only wear the four white priestly garments when entering the Holy of Holies.

Rabbeinu Yonah in his commentary on Chumash teaches that Aharon was being taught much more than simple procedure. He was being instructed in the philosophy and mentality with which he should approach this most holy room. The Holy of Holies was considered G-d's inner sanctum and was where the Holy Ark containing the Ten Commandments was kept. G-d's Divine Presence was in some sense concentrated and more palpable in that room, and it was through that room that G-d's Divine Presence resided among our nation. In recognition of this, it was appropriate for the High Priest to be extremely particular to follow G-d's protocol and not veer one iota from the instructions while alone with G-d. He had to maintain a full awareness of the fact that he was entering into G-d's inner sanctum and conduct himself with the humility, awe and trepidation appropriate for one who is literally standing before G-d.

Rabbeinu Yonah adds that there was a particular challenge for the High Priest in maintaining this attitude. He was entering a chamber where no other mortal was ever allowed to be. He alone had been chosen from the entire nation as the representative to stand before G-d and serve G-d in this way. Based on a Medrash (Vayikra Rabbah 21:10), he says that this is why the High Priest only wore the four white priestly garments when entering the Holy of Holies, but not the additional four garments of the High Priest which contained gold. Seeing himself bedecked in golden garments could lead the High Priest to feel this haughtiness. He therefore removes the golden garments before entering the Holy of Holies. This is what King Solomon said in Mishlei (25:6): *"Do not glorify yourself before a king."*

As the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies, he focuses his thoughts on the fact that he is entering G-d's inner chamber, and not on the fact that he alone was chosen for this mission. It is Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year. The mishnayos in Yoma give a detailed account of how the High Priest was carefully prepared by the leaders of the generation for an entire week before Yom Kippur. He is fasting, praying and repenting along with every other member of the nation. It would seem easy to maintain that focus.

Yet, if he is wearing gold as he enters the Holy of Holies, that could cause him to lose his focus. He has been wearing his gold garments until he enters the Holy of Holies and will wear them again when he leaves. He only removes them for the few moments when he is in G-d's inner sanctum. When he sees himself in gold, he will feel proud. That feeling of pride could lead him to focus on the fact that he alone was chosen for this service. If he removes the gold and avoids that feeling, he saves himself from that danger.

The way we dress and carry ourselves has a powerful impact on how we feel about ourselves. Even a humble person who dresses in a haughty fashion would feel pride. Once he feels pride, he may begin to find reasons to be proud and lose his humility. If we instead dress and carry ourselves in a humble and proper fashion, this will lead us to feel that we are part of the group and to work properly with those around us. The way we dress is a powerful tool we can use to help in avoiding haughtiness and in developing humility.

* Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD.

Acharei Mot - Kedoshim

By Rabbi Herzl Hefter *

[I did not receive a Dvar Torah from Rabbi Hefter this week. Look to this spot for future Devrei Torah from Rabbi Hefter.]]

* Founder and dean of the Har'el Beit Midrash in Jerusalem. Rabbi Hefter is a graduate of Yeshiva University and was ordained at Yeshivat Har Etzion. For more of his writings, see www.har-el.org. To support the Beit Midrash, as we do, send donations to America Friends of Beit Midrash Har'el, 66 Cherry Lane, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

Acharei Mot/Kedoshim: Be Unique – For I Am!

By Rabbi Haim Ovadia *

> *Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them: You shall be holy; for I YHWH your God, am holy.*

The word קדוש is traditionally translated as holy. The more meticulous commentators explain that קדוש means separate, designated, set aside. Consequently, all which is sacred is also קדוש because it must be set apart and not accessed by all. In that sense, the opening verse of Parashat Kedoshim is understood as saying that just as God is set apart from the world, so devout Israelites must separate themselves from the rest of the people, from the nations, and from the crowd. According to Nahmanides, the process of separation continues within the nation, as those who want to be spiritually elevated take upon themselves additional measures of abstinence and religious practices.

This interpretation raises several problems:

1. Immediately following the imperative "be holy!" the Torah lists forbidden actions along desired ones. Most of them are natural laws, preached, if not practically followed, by most civilized societies. Nowhere in this portion or in the Bible can we find support for the idea of

> *"abstain even from the things which are allowed."*

2. In Exodus)19:6(God refers to the Israelites as *"a kingdom of priests."* Since the role of a priest is to teach and promulgate knowledge of the Torah, as stated by Malachi)2:7(, this designation means that just as the Kohanim are the spiritual leaders of the nation, so the nation should become a spiritual guidelight for the whole world. This idea is also supported by the famous words of Isaiah)2:3(and Micah)4:2(: *"…many nations will say, let us ascend the mount of the God of Jacob, so He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths."* How can we succeed in that mission if we become aloof and search for ways to be better than others?

3. The interpretation of קדוש as holy suggests a level of separation between factions of the nation and between individuals, but the language of the whole chapter is one of friendship and connectivity. To illustrate that, here is the list of words which refer to different segments of the nation and the family in the first 18 verses of chapter 19:

> *All the congregation of the children of Israel; mother and father; the poor and the sojourner; your companion; your friend; a hired worker; a deaf person; a blind person; a poor person; an important person; your tribesmen; your friend; your brother; your companion; your fellow men…*
> and the culmination *"love the other as you love yourself."*

This list shows without doubt that the theme of the chapter is inclusivity and friendship, rather than the creation of a holy, elitist religious group.

I would therefore suggest a different interpretation of קדוש, one which is in line with its original Hebrew context – unique. Verse 19:2 will be translated thus:

> *Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and tell them: you shall be unique, for I, God, am unique!*

Already the early Mishnaic scholars emphasized the idea of an individual's uniqueness. Talmud Yerushalmi)Berakhot 9:1(mentions a special blessing recited upon seeing a great multitude:

> *blessed is the Master of Secrets]who created so many people[, each with a unique face, each with a unique personality.*

This blessing, as other statements in Rabbinical literature, relies on the beautiful concept, found in the first chapter of the Torah, that humans were created in the image of God.

Throughout human history, the uniqueness of the individual was challenged and suppressed by monarchs, tyrants, and totalitarian regimes. Today, we would like to think that, at least in developed countries, such oppression has all but disappeared, and that if it exists it is limited to religious movements which indoctrinate their followers into thoughtless adherence to a clear-cut ideology. Sadly, this is not the case. Though we made significant progress in the ability of mankind to understand and respect differences and otherness, our society, even in countries we would like to think of as modern, is fragmented and stratified. We equate unity with uniformity, and therefore seek to conceal or erase differences. When we fail, we often shut ourselves in a bubble of people who are like us, either physically, religiously, or intellectually, and find there our refuge of unity.

This rejection of human individuality stems from fear and from the inability to appreciate and digest our multifaceted, and sometimes insane, human experience. I have recently found that fear expressed by Yuval Noah Harari, a professor of history at Hebrew University and a best-selling author. In his book *Homo Deus,* Harari argues for a new understanding of mankind, one which makes us nothing more than a random collection of wires, neurons, and chemical reactions. Our experiences, he claims, are all subjective, and there is no objective entity or personality which could be described as human. Harari goes on to predict the end of humanity as we know it, and its replacement by improved cyborgs. Harari's scientific-philosophical treatise is nothing less than a new way to oppress human creativity and individuality by making them insignificant. The Torah guides us not to be swayed by ancient or modern ideologues. Each individual is, as the word indicates, indivisible and unique. This understanding leads to an appreciation of one's own talents and gifts, and to the nurturing of self-esteem and a sense of purpose and fulfilment. It is than extended towards the rest of humanity, as we realize that all others are unique as well.

Shabbat Shalom.

* Torah VeAhava. Rabbi, Beth Sholom Sephardic Minyan)Potomac, MD(and faculty member, AJRCA non-denominational rabbinical school(. **New: Many of Rabbi Ovadia's Devrei Torah are now available on Sefaria: https://www.sefaria.org/profile/haim-ovadia?tab=sheets** . The Sefaria articles usually include Hebrew text, which I must delete because of issues changing software formats.

Land of Milk and Honey — Exploring the Blessing of Israel

By Rabbi Eitan Cooper *

We've all heard the phrase — Israel is the "Land Flowing with Milk and Honey."

But what exactly does this mean? And can this phrase teach us anything in particular, as we reflect on Israel turning 75 this past week?

The end of this week's Torah Portion)Achrei Mot-Kedoshim(contains one of the several instances of this famous description of Israel)though it is the only time in the book of Leviticus that it appears(. In the context of this week's parsha, the idea that Israel is a land flowing with milk and honey suggests a sense of distinction:

> "and said to you: You shall possess their land, for I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. I the LORD am your God who has set you apart from other peoples.")Vayikra 20:24(

The pasuk)verse(states that Hashem has granted the Jewish people a beautiful land, one that is so bountiful and blessed that it is overflowing with resources. The commentator Ibn Ezra summarizes this very succinctly, saying *"Ein Kamoha"* — there is no land like it.

This is likely the most popular interpretation of the phrase. And there is a lesson to be learned from it, to be sure. Israel can indeed be like no other land, and the Jewish people are blessed to be able to live in Israel and build a state there.

This blessing of the land of Israel makes the Jewish people unique and special. Through living in the land, we are separated from the other nations of the world)as the Torah specifically states in the pasuk above(.

Yet there is a second, unexpected message to be found behind these words. In order to understand them fully, one must appreciate the ancient Near Eastern context in which the Torah was given. The Ugaritic god Baal was believed to be responsible for fertility and abundance. An ancient Ugaritic text states that this god made it so that "the heavens rain fat; the wadis flow with honey")See Koren *Land of Israel Tanakh,* Leviticus, Page 154(.

In other words, the description of a Land being one flowing with milk and honey is not unique to the Jewish people) the word for milk in Hebrew, chalav, can also mean "fat."(! Other cultures made use of this phrase as a reference to the bounty of their land.

The lesson to be learned from this interpretation is perhaps surprising: Even as we might consider our land to be unique and special, we must also consider the opposite: We are just like any other nation.

But really, one does not need to look at ancient Ugaritic texts to hear this message. Even the earliest Zionist leaders made clear that Israel was not only meant to be a unique blessing, but also completely common — just like every other country. In the Declaration of Independence that we celebrated this week on Yom Ha'atzmaut, David Ben Gurion)the first Prime Minister of Israel(says, *"This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State."* This commonality, in its own way, is a blessing — to be able to live like any other nation in the world, free of the pain and persecution and suffering that characterized so much of Jewish history before 1948.

Of course, it's important to remember both of these messages, as they are both blessings: Yes, Israel is unique and special, and also, at the same time, it is like any other nation in the world. And while I could try to end this Dvar Torah with a poignant reflection of my own, it seems fitting to turn to David Ben Gurion's inspiring words:

> *"Two basic aspirations underlie all our work in this country: To be like all other nations, and to be different from all the nations. These two aspirations are apparently contradictory, but in fact they are complementary and interdependent. We want to be a free people, independent and equal in rights in the family of nations, and we aspire to be different from all other nations in our spiritual elevation and in the character of our model society, founded on freedom, cooperation, and fraternity with all Jews and the whole human race…"*

Shabbat shalom!

* Assistant Rabbi, of Beth Sholom Congregation, Potomac, MD. Alumnus of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah and my very close personal friend. Hebrew omitted because of problems going across various software programs.

https://library.yctorah.org/2023/04/hope-in-heldenplatz/

Shavuon Acharei Mot - Kedoshim

By Rabbi Moshe Rube *

Broken hearts serve as one of our greatest teachers and prisms through which we see the true nature of life. But they also hurt really bad.

Our countries, freedoms, Western walls, and nationhoods have been built on all the ultimate sacrifices that our heroic soldiers made. And it also has been built on the broken hearts of all their loved ones who were daggered with the pain of their loss.

Through the path of a heart split in two comes forth something new. It happened in our Torah portion where Aharon and his children realise their full potential as priests only after the tragedy of the death of his two children, Nadav and Avihu.

This week we observe both ANZAC day and Yom Hazikaron, when we commemorate our lost ones in whose society we now live in. We all marched through the path split open by these heroes. What would New Zealand be without the brokenness? Would the Jews have their own State of Israel if the soldiers and their families did not offer up their hearts to the Altar?

I remember a television program that showed a husband and wife who lost their children in a Civil War battle. The wife had gone mad, and as she was being led away for treatment, put her hand on her husband's heart and said, "You must let your heart break. Only when you reach the lowest parts of you can there be change."

So bless the soldiers and their families who allowed their hearts to break. May God create a new heart and a new spirit within you.

Shabbat Shalom!

Rabbi Rube

* Senior Rabbi of Auckland Hebrew Congregation, Remuera)Auckland(, New Zealand.

Rav Kook Torah
Kedoshim: Lessons in Tzedakah

The Last Edge Harvested

One form of assistance which the Torah mandates to be given to the needy is the mitzvah of pei'ah. The farmer must leave over a corner)pei'ah(of his field for the poor.

> *"When you reap your land's harvest, do not completely harvest the corners of your fields. ... Leave them for the poor and the stranger."*)Lev. 19:9-10(

The Sages stressed that the area left over for the poor must be the very last edge harvested. One may not set aside a section at the start or in the middle of the harvesting process. Why not? By requiring pei'ah to be the final section of the field that was harvested, the Torah establishes a set time for the poor to claim their portion. The Talmud)Shabbat 23a(notes that this provision prevents four potential problems:

> **Stealing from the poor**. The landowner could set aside the pei'ah at some pre-arranged hour, in order to make sure the corner produce will go to friends or relatives instead of the needy.
>
> **Lost time.** The needy will not need to hang around the field, waiting until the moment the owner arbitrarily decides to declare a section of his field to be pei'ah.
>
> **Unwarranted suspicions.** People might not know that the farmer set aside his pei'ah earlier, and suspect him of not fulfilling the mitzvah.
>
> **Swindlers.** Unscrupulous farmers could claim they set aside pei'ah earlier, when they never did so.

Rav Kook wrote that these four concerns clarify the Torah's views on charity.

Moral Duty

The very phrase, "stealing from the poor," is instructive. Helping the needy is not simply a matter of generosity. It is a social and moral obligation. The Hebrew word for charity)tzedakah(comes from the root tzedek, meaning justice. One

who refuses to assist the poor does not just lack the quality of generosity. He is a thief, stealing from what rightfully belongs to others!
In general, the existence of poverty in the world should not be looked upon as a purely negative phenomenon. There are many purposes to poverty, including its contribution to our spiritual growth.

Empathy for the Poor

If we only emphasize the obligatory aspect of tzedakah, we are concentrating solely on the donor's standpoint and overlooking the needs of the one receiving. This mitzvah also requires an attitude of generosity and kindness. We need to have empathy for the needy and their troubles. For this reason, the Torah expresses concern for the poor person's time and his sense of self-respect. He should not have to wait until the owner finally decides to provide him with produce from the pei'ah.

In short, the foundation of Jewish charity is duty. But an attitude of empathy and understanding is also necessary to fully attain the goal of tzedakah.

Social Obligation

Social mores can serve to protect the weak and the destitute. Some people give because they are embarrassed to be seen as stingy and uncaring. In addition, society honors generous donors and benefactors.

The first two aspects mentioned, our moral obligation and the need to develop empathy, comprise the internal incentive to help the poor. Only taking these aspects into account, however, minimizes the contribution of social pressure to encourage people to support the needy. One who is fully aware of the importance of charity does not require this external motivation. Not everyone, however, achieves this level of enlightenment. For the good of society as a whole, the Torah affirms the importance of social obligations to give and help others. With regard to the mitzvah of pei'ah, this is expressed by our concern that society may unjustly place suspicions on those who in fact did set aside pei'ah.

Stopping Swindlers

The fourth problem — closing off a potential loophole for swindlers — only applies to the lowest, most corrupt segments of society. Nonetheless, this is a sufficient reason to obligate all members of society. An organic unity exists within society. People are influenced by one another, and an enlightened individual cannot claim to be impervious to the overall moral decay that such a loophole might bring about in society's lower elements.

)Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from *Ein Eyah* vol. III, pp.74-75.(

https://www.ravkooktorah.org/KEDOSHIM60.htm

Acharei Mot - Kedoshim: Made with Love)5780(

By Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l, Former Chief Rabbi of the U.K.*

Kedoshim contains the two great love commands of the Torah. The first is, *"Love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord"*)Lev. 19:18(. Rabbi Akiva called this *"the great principle of the Torah."* The second is no less challenging: *"The stranger living among you must be treated as your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were strangers in Egypt. I am the Lord your God"*)Lev. 19:34(.

These are extraordinary commands. Many civilisations contain variants of the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do to you," or in the negative form attributed to Hillel)sometimes called the Silver Rule(, *"What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. That is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary; go and learn."*]1[But these are rules of reciprocity, not love. We observe them because bad things will happen to us if we don't. They are the basic ground-rules of life in a group.

Love is something altogether different and more demanding. That makes these two commandments a revolution in the moral life. Judaism was the first civilisation to put love at the heart of morality. As Harry Redner puts it in *Ethical Life, "Morality is the ethic of love. The initial and most basic principle of morality is clearly stated in the Torah: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* He adds: *"The biblical* "love of one's neighbour" *is a very special form of love, a unique development of the Judaic religion and unlike any to be encountered outside it."*]2[

Much has been written about these commands. Who exactly is meant by "your neighbour"? Who by "the stranger"? And what is it to love someone else as oneself? I want to ask a different question. Why is it specifically here, in Kedoshim, in a chapter dedicated to the concept of holiness, that the command appears?

Nowhere else in all Tanach are we commanded to love our neighbour. And only in one other place)Deut. 10:19(are we commanded to love the stranger.)The Sages famously said that the Torah commands us thirty-six times to love the stranger, but that is not quite accurate. Thirty-four of those commands have to do with not oppressing or afflicting the stranger and making sure that he or she has the same legal rights as the native born. These are commands of justice rather than love(.

And why does the command to love your neighbour as yourself appear in a chapter containing such laws as, *"Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material"?* These are chukim, decrees, usually thought of as commands that have no reason, at any rate none that we can understand. What have they to do with the self-evidently moral commands of the love of neighbour and stranger? Is the chapter simply an assemblage of disconnected commands, or is there a single unifying strand to it?

The answer goes deep. Almost every ethical system ever devised has sought to reduce the moral life to a single principle or perspective. Some connect it to reason, others to emotion, yet others to consequences: do whatever creates the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Judaism is different. It is more complex and subtle. It contains not one perspective but three. There is the prophetic understanding of morality, the priestly perspective and the wisdom point of view.

Prophetic morality looks at the quality of relationships within a society, between us and God and between us and our fellow humans. Here are some of the key texts that define this morality. God says about Abraham*, "For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right]tzedakah[and just]mishpat[."*]3[God tells Hosea, *"I will betroth you to Me in righteousness]tzedek[and justice]mishpat[, in kindness]chessed[and compassion]rachamim[."*]4[He tells Jeremiah, *"I am the Lord, who exercises kindness]chessed[, justice]mishpat[and righteousness]tzedakah[on earth, for in these I delight, declares the Lord."*]5[Those are the key prophetic words: righteousness, justice, kindness and compassion – not love.

When the Prophets talk about love it is about God's love for Israel and the love we should show for God. With only three exceptions, they do not speak about love in a moral context, that is, vis-à-vis our relationships with one another. The exceptions are Amos' remark, *"Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts"*)Amos 5:15(; Micah's famous statement, *"Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God"*)Mic. 6:8(and Zechariah's *"Therefore love truth and peace"*)Zech. 8:19(. Note that all three are about loving abstractions – good, mercy and truth. They are not about people.

The prophetic voice is about how people conduct themselves in society. Are they faithful to God and to one another? Are they acting honestly, justly, and with due concern for the vulnerable in society? Do the political and religious leaders have integrity? Does society have the high morale that comes from people feeling that it treats its citizens well and calls forth the best in them? A moral society will succeed; an immoral or amoral one will fail. That is the key prophetic insight. The Prophets did not make the demand that people love one another. That was beyond their remit. Society requires justice, not love.

The wisdom voice in Torah and Tanach looks at character and consequence. If you live virtuously, then by and large things will go well for you. A good example is Psalm 1. The person occupied with Torah will be *"like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers."* That is the wisdom voice. Those who do well, fare well. They find happiness)ashrei(. Good people love God, family, friends and virtue. But the wisdom literature does not speak of loving your neighbour or the stranger.

The moral vision of the Priest that makes him different from the Prophet and Sage lies in the key word kadosh, "holy." Someone or something that is holy is set apart, distinctive, different. The Priests were set apart from the rest of the nation. They had no share in the land. They did not work as labourers in the field. Their sphere was the Tabernacle or Temple. They lived at the epicentre of the Divine Presence. As God's ministers they had to keep themselves pure and avoid any form of defilement. They were holy.

Until now, holiness has been seen as a special attribute of the Priest. But there was a hint at the Giving of the Torah that it concerned not just the children of Aaron but the people as a whole: *"You shall be to Me a Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation"*)Ex. 19:6(. Our chapter now spells this out for the first time. "The Lord said to Moses*, "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy"*)Lev. 19:1-2(. This tells us that the ethic of holiness applies not just to Priests but to the entire nation. We, too, must to be distinctive, set apart, held to a higher standard.

What in practice does this mean? A decisive clue is provided by another key word used throughout Tanach in relation to the Kohen, namely the verb b-d-l: to divide, set apart, separate, distinguish. That is what a Priest does. His task *is "to distinguish between the sacred and the secular"*)Lev. 10:10(, and *"to distinguish between the unclean and the clean"*)Lev. 11:47(. This is what God does for His people:

> *"You shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and I have distinguished you]va-avdil[from other peoples to be Mine."* Lev. 20:26

There is one other place in which b-d-l is a key word, namely the story of creation in Genesis 1, where it occurs five times. God separates light and dark, day and night, upper and lower waters. For three days God demarcates different domains, then for the next three days He places in each its appropriate objects or life-forms. God fashions order out of the tohu va-vohu of chaos. As His last act of creation, He makes man after His *"image and likeness."* This was clearly an act of love. *"Beloved is man,"* said Rabbi Akiva, *"because he was created in]God's[image."*]6[

Genesis 1 defines the priestly moral imagination. Unlike the Prophet, the Priest is not looking at society. He is not, like the wisdom figure, looking for happiness. He is looking at creation as the work of God. He knows that everything has its place: sacred and profane, permitted and forbidden. It is his task to make these distinctions and teach them to others. He knows that different life forms have their own niche in the environment. That is why the ethic of holiness includes rules like: Don't mate with different kinds of animals, don't plant a field with different kinds of seed, and don't wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

Above all the ethic of holiness tells us that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God. God made each of us in love. Therefore, if we seek to imitate God – *"Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy"* – we too must love humanity, and not in the abstract but in the concrete form of the neighbour and the stranger. The ethic of holiness is based on the vision of creation-as-God's-work-of-love. This vision sees all human beings – ourselves, our neighbour and the stranger – as in the image of God, and that is why we are to love our neighbour and the stranger as ourself.

I believe that there is something unique and contemporary about the ethic of holiness. It tells us that morality and ecology are closely related. They are both about creation: about the world as God's work and humanity as God's image. The integrity of humanity and the natural environment go together. The natural universe and humanity were both created by God, and we are charged to protect the first and love the second.

FOOTNOTES:

]1[Shabbat 31a.

]2[Harry Redner, *Ethical Life: The Past and Present of Ethical Cultures,* Roman and Littlefield, 2001, 49-68.

]3[Genesis 18:19.

]4[Hosea 2:19.

]5[Jeremiah 9:23.

]6[Mishnah Avot 3:14.

https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/acharei-mot/made-with-love/

Note: because Likutei Torah and the Internet Parsha Sheet, both attached by E-mail, normally include the two most recent Devrei Torah by Rabbi Sacks, I have selected an earlier Dvar.

"Thou Shalt Not Be Judgmental"

By Yossy Goldman * © Chabad 2023

Some years ago, I heard Rabbi Manis Friedman tell a story about a man who overheard his friend telling his wife on the phone, "Drop dead!"

"How can you speak that way to your wife?!" he demanded. The friend smiled and said, "She just asked me if her new dress was gorgeous, and I answered, 'Yes, drop-dead.' "

Hearing only half a conversation and drawing conclusions can be dangerous. I've lost count of how many times I've heard stories about others that I didn't want to believe, and indeed, upon investigation, they turned out to be either significant distortions or complete fabrications. I'm sure we've all had similar experiences.

In the portion of Kedoshim, we read the words, Betzedek tishpot amitecha,1 *"You shall judge your fellow with righteousness."*

Rashi, the foremost Biblical commentator, first provides the simple analysis, which is that judges must rule righteously, without being swayed by any other considerations. In fact, the full title of a beth din, a Jewish court, is not only beth din, a "house of law," but beth din tzedek, a "house of just law." The law must be just, fair, and objective — otherwise the court itself is not doing justice.

But then Rashi adds a second interpretation, relevant not only for the judiciary but for all of us. "Another explanation is: Judge your fellow favorably")i.e., give the benefit of the doubt(.

The moral imperative to judge people favorably by giving them the benefit of the doubt is discussed in the Talmud,2 Ethics of the Fathers,3 and many other Jewish sources.

I wondered what the connection might be to Kedoshim, a Torah portion dealing with the overall directive to be holy. And it occurred to me that perhaps it might be because, in fact, all of us are holy, but too often, people are misjudged and condemned before we have all the facts at our disposal. There are so many stories expressing this theme that we could go on forever, but let me share a few.

My friend and colleague, Rabbi Mendel Lipskar, tells the story of his early days in Johannesburg back in the '70s. He was a young, new rabbi in a synagogue frequented mainly by older people who were rather set in their ways. At some point during his first Yom Kippur there, a young man walked into the shul looking very out of place. He was wearing jeans and sandals, sporting long, frizzy hair — the consummate hippie. Rabbi Lipskar asked the gabbai to give the unexpected visitor the honor of opening the Holy Ark during the service. The gabbai was horrified. Who was this young man who was dressed so inappropriately? To give him such an honor was, to his mind, unthinkable. But the rabbi insisted, and the gabbai acceded, albeit most reluctantly. To make a long story short, that Yom Kippur experience was the beginning of a spiritual journey for the young visitor. Today the former hippie is a respected sofer)ritual scribe(in a large American city.

My son, Michoel, is a shliach in Kauai, the lushest of the Hawaiian Islands. Not infrequently, sunbathers come into the shul straight off the beach and need to be given not only a tallit, but robes or clothes as well. But the important thing is that they are always welcome.

I recently came across a letter to someone who complained to the Rebbe about a fellow who had been called into shul as the tenth man to help make the minyan. The complainant was outraged that the man sat in the back of the sanctuary reading the newspaper throughout the service.

The Rebbe suggested that he should appreciate how special it is that even a Jew who obviously cannot read Hebrew or participate in the service still comes in and gives up his time to help make the minyan.

It's all about perspective and giving people the benefit of the doubt.

Over 200 years ago, the holy Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev became famous for the lengths he would go to consider others favorably. Of the many stories that highlight his benevolent, non-judgmental attitude, one of my favorites is of his encounter with a young man outside shul on the holiest day of Yom Kippur. This strapping young man was eating publicly, in brazen violation of the fast.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak said, "I'm sorry to see that you're obviously not feeling well, and you had to break your fast. I wish you better."

"I'm fine, Rabbi. I couldn't be healthier," replied the young man.

"Well then, perhaps you forgot that today is Yom Kippur?"

"Who doesn't know that today is Yom Kippur, Rabbi?!"

"And are you also aware that Yom Kippur is a fast day, and we are not permitted to eat today?"

"Of course, I know! Which Jew doesn't know that, Rabbi?!"

Hearing this, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak looked heavenward and exclaimed, "Master of the Universe, see how righteous are your people, Israel. I have given this young man so many opportunities, but he absolutely refuses to tell a lie!"

All are innately holy, but how we judge them may make all the difference. I know it's not easy, but if we look at others favorably, then we ourselves will be behaving in a holy way, and this will bring out that innate holiness inside them.

Moreover, our rabbis taught: One who judges his friend favorably will himself be judged by G d favorably.4

FOOTNOTES:

1. Leviticus 19:15.

2. Shevuot 30a.

3. Chapter 1:6.

4. Shabbat 127b.

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https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/5931025/jewish/Thou-Shalt-Not-Be-Judgmental.htm

Acharei Mot - Kedoshim: Holy Table!

by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky *

Our Holy Table

You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I, G-d your G-d, am holy.)Lev. 20:7(

One of the messages in this verse is that we must make our meals holy. This means first that we should eat with proper intentions and manners, i.e., in order to have the energy to fulfill our Divine mission and with appreciation for G-d's benevolence in providing for our sustenance.

Secondly, we should make our meals into acts of charity by inviting guests and poor people to eat with us.

Finally, we should discuss the Torah at the table. If we sanctify our meals in these ways, we are told that our table acts like the Altar in the Temple, atoning for us and enabling us to achieve higher levels of Divine consciousness.

The reason our sanctified table functions like the Altar is because both serve as means through which the sparks of Divinity embedded in the physical world are elevated. When an animal is sacrificed on the Altar, the entire animal kingdom is elevated; when grain, wine, or oil is sacrificed on the Altar, the entire vegetable kingdom is elevated. Similarly, when we consume food and drink with holy intentions and in a holy way, all aspects of our lives and of the world are elevated.

– From Kehot's Daily Wisdom #3 *

Gut Shabbos,
Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman
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* *Your Dailly Wisdom,* a three volume set in a special lucite case, is now available from Kehot Publication Society. Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky has adapted and translated these inspiring lessons from the Lubivatcher Rebbe, and Chabad House Publications of California has now made them available in a special set:

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Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah via the Internet

Volume 29, Issue 27 **Shabbat Parashat Acharei Mot - Kedoshim** **5783 B"H**

Covenant and Conversation
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l

The Scapegoat

The strangest and most dramatic element of the service on Yom Kippur, set out in Acharei Mot (Lev. 16:7-22), was the ritual of the two goats, one offered as a sacrifice, the other sent away into the desert "to Azazel." They were to all intents and purposes indistinguishable from one another: they were chosen to be as similar as possible in size and appearance. They were brought before the High Priest and lots were drawn, one bearing the words "to the Lord," the other, "to Azazel." The one on which the lot "To the Lord" fell was offered as a sacrifice. Over the other the High Priest confessed the sins of the nation, and it was then taken away into the desert hills outside Jerusalem where it plunged to its death. Tradition tells us that a red thread would be attached to its horns, half of which was removed before the animal was sent away. If the rite had been effective, the red thread would turn to white.

Much is puzzling about the ritual. First, what is the meaning of "to Azazel," to which the second goat was sent? It appears nowhere else in Scripture. Three major theories emerged as to its meaning. According to the Sages and Rashi, it meant "a steep, rocky, or hard place". In other words, it was a description of its destination. In the plain meaning of the Torah, the goat was sent "to a desolate area" (el eretz gezerah, Lev. 16:22). According to the Sages, this meant it was thus taken to a steep ravine where it fell to its death. That, according to the first explanation, is the meaning of Azazel.

The second, suggested cryptically by Ibn Ezra and explicitly by Nahmanides, is that Azazel was the name of a spirit or demon, one of the fallen angels referred to in Genesis 6:2, similar to the goat-spirit called 'Pan' in Greek mythology, 'Faunus' in Latin. This is a difficult idea, which is why Ibn Ezra alluded to it, as he did in similar cases, by way of a riddle, a puzzle, that only the wise would be able to decipher.

He writes: I will reveal to you part of the secret by hint: when you reach thirty-three you will know it.

Nahmanides reveals the secret: Thirty-three verses later on, the Torah commands: "They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols [se'irim] after whom they go astray." See Nahmanides on Lev. 17:7

Azazel, on this reading, is the name of a demon or hostile force, sometimes called Satan or Samael. The Israelites were categorically forbidden to worship such a force. Indeed, the belief that there are powers at work in the universe distinct from, or even hostile to, God, is incompatible with Judaic monotheism. Nonetheless, some Sages did believe that there were negative forces that were part of the heavenly retinue, like Satan, who brought accusations against humans or tempted them into sin. The goat sent into the wilderness to Azazel was a way of conciliating or propitiating such forces so that the prayers of Israel could rise to heaven without, as it were, any dissenting voices. This way of understanding the rite is similar to the saying on the part of the Sages that we blow shofar in a double cycle on Rosh Hashanah "to confuse Satan." (Rosh Hashanah 16b)

The third interpretation, and the simplest, is that Azazel is a compound noun meaning "the goat [ez] that was sent away [azal]." This led to the addition of a new word to the English language. In 1530 William Tyndale produced the first English translation of the Hebrew Bible, an act then illegal and for which he paid with his life. Seeking to translate Azazel into English, he called it "the escapegoat," i.e. the goat that was sent away and released. In the course of time, the first letter was dropped, and the word "scapegoat" was born.

The real question, though, is: what was the ritual actually about? It was unique. Sin and guilt offerings are familiar features of the Torah and a normal part of the service of the Temple. The service of Yom Kippur was different in one salient respect: in every other case, the sin was confessed over the animal that was sacrificed. On Yom Kippur, the High Priest confessed the sins of the people over the animal that was not sacrificed, the scapegoat that was sent away, "carrying on it all their iniquities" (Lev. 16:21-22).

The simplest and most compelling answer was given by Maimonides in The Guide for the Perplexed: There is no doubt that sins cannot be carried like a burden, and taken off the shoulder of one being to be laid on that of another being. But these ceremonies are of a symbolic character, and serve to impress people with a certain idea, and to induce them to repent – as if to say, we have freed ourselves of our previous deeds, have cast them behind our backs, and removed them from us as far as possible.[1]

Expiation demands a ritual, some dramatic representation of the removal of sin and the wiping-clean of the past. That is clear. Yet Maimonides does not explain why Yom Kippur demanded a rite not used on other days of the year when sin or guilt offerings were brought. Why was the first goat, the one of which the lot "To the Lord" fell and which was offered as a sin offering (Lev. 16:9) not sufficient?

The answer lies in the dual character of the day. The Torah states: This shall be an everlasting statute for you: on the tenth day of the seventh month you must afflict yourselves. you shall perform no work at all… On this day, [yechaper] atonement shall be made to [le-taher] purify you; of all your sins you shall be purified before the Lord. Lev. 16:29-30

Two quite distinct processes were involved on Yom Kippur. First there was kapparah, atonement. This is the normal function of a sin offering. Second, there was taharah, purification, something normally done in a different context altogether, namely the removal of tumah, ritual defilement, which could arise from a number of different causes, among them contact with a dead body, skin disease, or nocturnal discharge. Atonement has to do with guilt. Purification has to do with contamination or pollution. These are usually[2] two separate worlds. On Yom Kippur they were brought together. Why?

As we discussed in parshat Metzora, we owe to anthropologists like Ruth Benedict the distinction between shame cultures and guilt cultures.[3] Shame is a social phenomenon. It is what we feel when our wrongdoing is exposed to others. It may even be something we feel when we merely imagine other people knowing or seeing what we have done. Shame is the feeling of being found out, and our first instinct is to hide. That is what Adam and Eve did in the garden of Eden after they had eaten the forbidden fruit. They were ashamed of their nakedness and they hid.

Guilt is a personal phenomenon. It has nothing to do with what others might say if they knew what we have done, and everything to do with what we say to ourselves. Guilt is the voice of conscience, and it is inescapable. You may be able to avoid shame by hiding or not being found out, but you cannot avoid guilt. Guilt is self-knowledge.

There is another difference which, once understood, explains why Judaism is overwhelmingly a guilt rather than a shame culture. Shame attaches to the person. Guilt attaches to the act. It is almost impossible to

remove shame once you have been publicly disgraced. It is like an indelible stain on your skin. It is the mark of Cain. Shakespeare has Lady Macbeth exclaim, after her crime, "Will these hands ne'er be clean?" In shame cultures, wrongdoers tend either to go into hiding or into exile, where no one knows their past, or to commit suicide. Playwrights in these cultures have such characters die, for there is no possible redemption.

Guilt makes a clear distinction between the act of wrongdoing and the person of the wrongdoer. The act was wrong, but the agent remains, in principle, intact. That is why guilt can be removed, "atoned for," by confession, remorse, and restitution. "Hate not the sinner but the sin," is the basic axiom of a guilt culture.

Normally, sin and guilt offerings, as their names imply, are about guilt. They atone. But Yom Kippur deals not only with our sins as individuals. It also confronts our sins as a community bound by mutual responsibility. It deals, in other words, with the social as well as the personal dimension of wrongdoing. Yom Kippur is about shame as well as guilt. Hence there has to be purification (the removal of the stain) as well as atonement.

The psychology of shame is quite different to that of guilt. We can discharge guilt by achieving forgiveness – and forgiveness can only be granted by the object of our wrongdoing, which is why Yom Kippur only atones for sins against God. Even God cannot – logically cannot – forgive sins committed against our fellow humans until they themselves have forgiven us.

Shame cannot be removed by forgiveness. The victim of our crime may have forgiven us, but we still feel defiled by the knowledge that our name has been disgraced, our reputation harmed, our standing damaged. We still feel the stigma, the dishonour, the degradation. That is why an immensely powerful and dramatic ceremony had to take place during which people could feel and symbolically see their sins carried away to the desert, to no-man's-land. A similar ceremony took place when a leper was cleansed. The Priest took two birds, killed one, and released the other to fly away across the open fields (Lev. 14:4-7). Again the act was one of cleansing, not atoning, and had to do with shame, not guilt.

Judaism is a religion of hope, and its great rituals of repentance and atonement are part of that hope. We are not condemned to live endlessly with the mistakes and errors of our past. That is the great difference between a guilt culture and a shame culture. But Judaism also acknowledges the existence of shame. Hence the elaborate ritual of the scapegoat that seemed to carry away the tumah, the defilement that is the mark of shame. It could only be done on Yom Kippur because that was the one day of the year in which everyone shared, at least vicariously, in the process of confession, repentance, atonement, and purification. When a whole society confesses its guilt, individuals can be redeemed from shame.

[1] The Guide for the Perplexed, III:46.

[2] There were, though, exceptions. A leper – or more precisely someone suffering from the skin disease known in the Torah as tsara'at – had to bring a guilt offering [asham] in addition to undergoing rites of purification (Lev. 14:12-20).

[3] Ruth Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin) 1946.

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Rabbi Akiva's Students Were Punished for Something Worse Than Lack of Mutual Respect

Parshas Kedohsim contains the famous pasuk "You should love your neighbor as yourself." [Vayikra 19:18], about which Rabbi Akiva stated: Zeh Klal Gadol b'Torah (This is the fundamental principle of Torah). This pasuk teaches the positive Biblical command of loving every Jew, or as the Ramban explains it more precisely, treating every Jew as though you love him. (Whether this mitzvah obligates an emotional feeling is not so clear, but at the very least, a person must treat his fellow Jew with the same love and concern that he would treat himself). Do unto him as you would want to be done to you, and don't do to him what you would not want to be done to you.

As we all know, we are now in the days of Sefiras HaOmer, in which we commemorate the death of the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva. One of the great ironies of Jewish history is that Rabbi Akiva, who used to preach V'Ahavta L'Reyacha Ka'mocha, had 24,000 disciples who, Chazal say, died because lo nohagu kavod zeh b'zeh (they did not treat each another with proper respect).

Imagine this tragedy—24,000 Torah students dying in a relatively short timeframe. We cannot even imagine it! There are large Yeshivas in the world today. There are six or seven thousand talmidim in Lakewood. There are an equal number in the Mir Yeshiva in Yerushalayim. Chas v'Shalom, can we imagine one of those Yeshivas suddenly not being here? It would be a tragedy of major proportions! And as a punishment for what sin? Because they did not have proper respect for one another! That is something we cannot fathom!

There are different theories advanced as to why Rabbi Akiva's students were punished so severely for something which is certainly not a capital offense. One classic answer is that their high spiritual level magnified the significance of their actions inasmuch as HaKadosh Baruch Hu has a higher standard for tzadikim. "He weighs out retribution for them according to a thin strand of hair." [Bava Kama 50a]

I saw an interesting explanation from the Chofetz Chaim, who asks this question: What crime or sin did they commit that they should be subject to death? He advances a novel idea: They were not punished for the sin of disrespecting their fellow man, but for the sin of Chilul HaShem (Desecration of the Name of G-d). The lack of mutual respect manifested by Rabbi Akiva's disciples spread the impression in the world at large that Talmidei Chachomim fight with one another.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that the "lack of respect" stemmed from terrible machlokes and divisiveness that existed among Rabbi Akiva's students. For Talmidei Chachomim to be arguing with one another, said the Chofetz Chaim, is a Chilul HaShem. Chilul HaShem is a sin that can in fact be punishable by death!

The Almighty Should Give You the Benefit of the "Doubt"

Just a few pesukim earlier in the parsha, the pasuk says "You shall not commit a perversion of justice; you shall not favor the poor and you shall not honor the great; with righteousness shall you judge your fellow man." [Vayikra 19:15] Even though this pasuk is ostensibly referring to Beis Din—how judges are supposed to act, Chazal say that the last words of the pasuk—b'tzedek tishpot amisecha—also imply that a person should give his friend the benefit of the doubt (havey dan l'kaf zechus).

When you see someone doing something that on the face of it seems to be a very bad thing, give him the benefit of the doubt. Try to be melamed zechus! Many times things are not as they appear.

There is a famous Gemara in Maseches Shabbos [127b] which provides three different examples. I will only quote one briefly. The Gemara illustrates how far a person must go to give someone the benefit of the doubt:

The Rabbis taught: One who judges his fellow man favorably is himself judged favorably. There was an incident involving a certain man who went down from Upper Galilee and entered the employ of a certain homeowner in the south for three years. On Erev Yom Kippur, the worker said to the employer: "Give me my wages and I will go and provide for my wife and children." The employer replied, "I have no money." The worker said "Then give me my wages in the form of produce." The employer said "I have none." The worker suggested: "Give me land." "I have none." "Then give me livestock" "I have none." "Then give me pillows and cushions" "I have none." Unable to obtain any of the wages due him, the worker slung his belongings over his back and returned home dejectedly.

After the Festival, the employer took the worker's wages in his hand along with three donkey-loads of goods—one donkey-load of food, one of drink, and one of various sweet delicacies—and traveled to his former worker's house in the Upper Galilee. After they had eaten and drunk, he paid the worker his wages. He said to the worker: "When you said to me, 'Give me my wages' and I said 'I

have no money,' of what did you suspect me?" The worker replied, "I said to myself that perhaps underpriced merchandise came your way and you bought it with the monies that you would have otherwise used to pay my wages."

The Gemara goes through each of the "excuses" that the employer advanced to his worker, and explains how the worker gave him the benefit of the doubt and assumed—in every one of the cases—a scenario which would have legally justified such a response. When the employer told him "I have absolutely nothing to give you" the employer hypothesized "Perhaps he sanctified all his possessions to the Beis HaMikdash."

The employer took an oath "By the Divine Service! So it was! I had vowed all my possessions to Heaven because of my son Hurkonos who did not occupy himself in Torah study, so I did not wish him to benefit from them. And when I came to my colleagues in the South, they annulled for me all my vows. And as for you—just as you have judged me favorably, so may the Omnipresent judge you favorably as well!"

That is the synopsis of the Gemara in Shabbos. But, let us ask a simple question: If you see a religious Jew driving down Park Heights Ave in Baltimore on Shabbos, you can think one of two things: You can think "Well, this fellow suddenly threw religion all away" or you can think "He has a medical emergency and he needs to get to the hospital and he can't get a cab so he is driving down Park Heights Avenue on Shabbos.

Now, human beings can have that doubt because we do not know why he is driving on Shabbos, even though until now we knew him to be a religious Jew. But with the Ribono shel Olam, what sense does it make to speak about 'doubt'? What does it mean "Just like you judged me favorably, the Ribono shel Olam should judge you favorably"? The Ribono shel Olam knows exactly what is going on. He knows exactly why you are driving down Park Heights Avenue. He knows it is because your wife is pregnant and she is having a baby in the back seat. There is no safek (doubt) to Him about the matter!

There is a famous vort from the Baal Shem Tov. The expression of the Mishna in Avos [1:6] is "Havey dan es KOL ha'Adam l'kaf Zechus." It should have said Havey dan es ha'Adam l'Kaf Zechus—judge man favorably. What does the adjective KOL (all) come to add?

The Baal Shem Tov explains: When judging people, the person needs to know their WHOLE history. A person needs to know where he has been, what he is currently going through, and what he will be going through. A person cannot merely judge based on what he witnesses right then in front of his eyes. The person's whole life experiences must be taken into account before rendering a fair judgement. This is the meaning of KOL ha'Adam: It includes his history, his parents, his siblings, where he has been, what he has gone through, and everything about him!

That is the bracha mentioned in the Talmud. Of course, the Ribono shel Olam knows what you are doing right now. But the blessing is that the Almighty should take into account all the factors that brought you to this current action. He should generously temper any harsh judgement by taking all extenuating circumstances which are in your favor into account: "Listen, the person has been through X, Y, and Z – I need to give him a break!

Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel
Encyclopedia of Jewish Values*

Obligation to Judge Favorably

There are so many practical and essential Mitzvot-commandments in this week's portion, with so many important Jewish values. Because of this, many "essential" values are overlooked. In one verse in our Parsha, Jews are commanded to judge their fellow Jews fairly (Leviticus 19:15). This implies not to misjudge them, as Rashi's first explanation of the simple verse implies. But Rashi then writes that there is an obligation to judge every Jew in every situation favorably," Lekaf *Zechut*". This is an obligation to view the situation and the person much more positively than the objective facts suggest. So, which is it - to judge Jews fairly or to judge them positively in every situation, beyond the facts? What does judging people favorably, in fact, signify, in a practical sense? What are the details of judging people in this manner?

Part of the nature of human beings is the tendency to constantly analyze everyday situations that occur in their lives - tens or even hundreds of them - like a super-fast computer, instantaneously examining many factors regarding other people's actions, and then making snap judgments about what is taking place. As part of this process, people often automatically judge whether any given action by others is moral or immoral, right or wrong. Usually, if the individuals are people that we know, like, or respect, we tend to give them the "benefit of the doubt" when looking at any moral situation that could be judged in more than one manner. For those we do not particularly like or do not know, most people tend to judge more harshly, even when the deduction about whether something is right or wrong, moral or immoral, seems evenly balanced. Regarding such everyday occasions, Judaism has a special moral imperative in almost all situations to "judge others favorably" and extend the benefit of the doubt to others by believing that they are doing the "right thing," even when we do not know the people personally. The details of this commandment, the reasons, and the parameters of this Jewish law, will be explained below.

The General Mitzvah and Obligation to Judge Someone Favorably - On the simple level, this obligation implies that if there are two ways of viewing a person's actions or activity - one that it is moral and the other that it is immoral -- there is a special imperative to choose to view it as a moral or "correct" action, accompanied by the right motives, rather than the opposite. The Mishna is the origin of Rashi's statement above, commanding Jews to judge each person favorably (Mishna Avot 1:6), while the Talmud (Shavuot 30a) reinforces the idea to judge every Jew favorably in all situations. Another Midrash uses our verse from the Parsha to prove that every person (not only Jews) should be judged favorably (Midrash, Sifra Kedoshim 4:4). A different Mishna discusses another related issue, but the essence of the dictum in that Mishna boils down to the same or a similar concept. It says there that someone cannot judge anyone else until he or she has "lived in that person's shoes" - i.e., has experienced his exact circumstances in life (Mishna Avot 2:4). Since no one can ever know or fully comprehend each of the all-encompassing factors and circumstances that have transpired in someone else's life, the Mishna, in effect, is instructing every Jew to judge every other person's actions favorably. The wording in Hebrew of our original Mishna also seems to support this idea. It does not simply say to judge each person (*Adam*) favorably. Rather, it states that we must judge the entire person (*Ha-Adam*) favorably. It has been suggested that the use of this wording is to tell us that if a person looks at the *entire* individual - i.e., *all* the factors involved in each act, then they will be able to find something positive within each individual to change their perspective of what they might have at first considered negative motives or immoral action. By searching for any possible positive explanation, human beings can and will be able to consider mitigating circumstances and see something positive, within each questionable activity.

Rabbi Judah Chasid (12th century) also stresses the importance of judging people favorably whenever possible (Sefer Chasidim 31). Rabbi Moshe Coucy, in his 13th-century Book of Commandments, considers this specific obligation as one of the 613 commandments of the Torah (Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, Positive Mitzvah 106). Maimonides also lists the obligation to judge everyone favorably in his Book of Commandments (Maimonides, Book of Commandments, Positive Commandment 177), but then in his book of Jewish law, Maimonides states that this obligation to judge favorably is limited only to a Talmudic Scholar who evaluates the actions of people, and, thus, does not apply to every Jew (Maimonides, Hilchot Deot 5:7). Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (Chofetz Chaim) resolves this apparent contradiction by saying that while some authorities list this obligation as a formal Torah Mitzvah-Commandment (such as *Semak*, Rabbeinu Yonah, and others), Maimonides in

his Book of Commandments writes this as only a suggestion and a moral act of goodwill, but not as an actual Commandment (Chofetz Chaim, Be-air Mayim Chaim, Introduction). A Talmudic scholar, however, *would* be obligated by the Torah to judge everyone favorably as a commandment, and not merely as an act of moral goodwill. Whether a formal Commandment, a Torah, or a Rabbinic obligation, all the Rabbis seem to agree that in almost all situations (as explained in detail below), a Jew should choose to see every act of every person in a positive rather than a negative light and attribute good intentions to each individual.

The Importance of Judging Someone Favorably - In addition to the commandment itself (for which a traditional Jew needs no reason or justification to obey God's desire), there are numerous other benefits for each person who goes through life judging every action of others for good, as a positive rather than a negative act, when both assessments are possible. The first reason to act in this manner is a very selfish one. The Midrash promises that if Jews judge the action of others favorably, then their actions will be ascribed as favorable and good by God when He assesses their moral behavior (Midrash, Yalkut Shimoni, Vayikra 19 611). Another reason to consider all possible actions by others as positive is that it will bring a special reward to one who is judging. There are very few commandments in Judaism that the Rabbis say are so important that the reward for them will be given both in this world (the "interest") and the Next World (the "principle"). One of the commandments that can gain a person such a reward is the act of judging others favorably (Shabbat 127a).

Another natural benefit to cultivating a generally positive attitude towards others and their behavior is the greater friendship and camaraderie that will be formed among human beings. If people always attribute positive motives to others, then they will come to think better of them. Sefer Hachinuch explains (Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvah 235) that if everyone behaved and thought in this manner, there would be far less enmity between people, which would in turn bring much more peace and harmony between individuals. This is also the opinion of Rashi, who says peace between people is a natural outgrowth of judging people favorably (Rashi commentary on Shabbat 127a).

Yet another benefit of such a general attitude towards others is that it will bring a person closer to God. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan believes (Sefer Mitzvot Katan, 223) that people who take this approach to the actions of others will ascribe few or no sins to other individuals but will view their actions and sins more harshly, causing them to repent and become more spiritual. Another very practical reason to adopt this approach to life (and how people assess the behavior of others) is to avoid committing a sin for which there is severe punishment. The Talmud rules (Yoma 19b) that anyone who wrongly finds fault with someone else who is legitimately guilt-free, is then punished with corporal (physical) punishment upon one's body.

A side benefit of this attitude is that it will help other people indirectly. How Jews look at the actions of another person will directly influence how God looks upon that person as well. Each time Jews judge others positively, their behavior (in God's eyes), will also be looked upon more favorably (Pele Yoetz "*Sanaigoria*").

Common Mistakes and Dangers in Judging or Not Judging Someone Favorably - There are several common mistakes or pitfalls in misjudging the situations or the actions or speech of other people. Before any conclusions are reached, each person should first ascertain the following.

1. *Make sure the identity of the person in question is correct*. Many people, especially from afar, look very similar. Sometimes we can think it is a certain person doing this action, but it turns out to be a stranger we do not even know.
2. *What an individual hears about a person may not always be accurate*. Others tell someone that this person did something wrong (usually on a subjective basis). People make mistakes in telling the "facts." Before conclusions are drawn, it is important to find out what transpired and not base one's conclusion solely on the details someone told over about what happened.
3. *Mistakes in the media*. Sometimes details about the action are reported in the press, but they turn out to be inaccurate. Before attributing blame on a person, first ascertain that what is claimed about this person is true.
4. *Mistaken memory*. Sometimes people rely on their memories to form the basis of a judgment about another person. But memories are not always 100% accurate. For example, people can become angry with a person who did not return an object that was loaned to him or her. The owners get angry and upset. But it turns out, quite often, that the object was returned, and they simply forgot.
5. *Circumstantial evidence*. It "looks" like something happened in a certain way, based on circumstantial evidence. But that is not proof in a Jewish court, and it should not be used to "convict" someone in one's mind as well. If there is an alternative way to explain the facts, even if it is less logical, that should be the basis for the (positive) conclusion people reach.
6. *Incomplete knowledge of Jewish law*. People often believe someone is violating a particular Jewish law without any real expertise in this area. No one should judge the actions of a Jew who is violating a Jewish law until he or she goes back and checks exactly what the law is in all its details and parameters. Often, people can get it wrong, and ascribe sin to someone who is acting perfectly legitimately and following proper Jewish practice.

*** This column has been adapted from a series of volumes written by Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel "*The Encyclopedia of Jewish Values*" available from Urim and Amazon. For the full article or to review all the footnotes in the original, contact the author at nachum@jewishdestiny.com**

Dvar Torah: TorahWeb.Org

Rabbi Michael Rosensweig

Tzeniut as a Factor in Spirituality, Avodah, and National Kapparah

In its delineation of the avodat Yom Hakippurim, the Torah (Vayikra 16:17) imparts "vekol adam lo yihiyeh be-ohel moed bevo'o le-kaper ba-kodesh ad tzeito" - that while the kohen gadol served in the Kodesh Kodashim during the blood sprinkling of the par and sair sacrifices (16:14-15) and while the ketoret was being consumed (16:12-13), no one was permitted even in the adjacent venue of the heichal. The Talmud (Yoma 44a) extends this principle. Thus, when avodah (the daily ketoret, the blood offerings-matanot of the Yom Kippur korbonot or of the par he'elem davar etc.) took place in the heichal, the adjacent area between the ulam and mizbeach also had to be evacuated. It is intriguing that the verse conveying this puzzling restriction concludes by referring to the expansive atonement accomplished by these most private avodot of Yom Kippur - "vekiper ba'ado u'be'ad beito u'be'ad kol Kehal Yisrael." [This is the most sweeping and inclusive expression of collective forgiveness in the avodah. See 16:6,11- "vekiper ba'ado u'be'ad beito", 16:24-"vekiper ba'ado u'be'ad ha'am", 16:33-"ve-al hakohanim ve-al kol am hakahal vekiper"] What is the significance of this extraordinary privacy requirement and how is it connected to the broad impact of the avodah. Indeed, the Gemara (Yoma 44a) notes that the source verse does not explicitly mention the ketoret, but that the conclusion that refers to the atonement of the entire Klal Yisrael implies it -"eizeh kaparah sheshaveh lo ule'ehav hakohanim ve-kol Kehal Yisrael hevi omer zu haketoret." While some (Chizkuni 16:17) perceives this demand to be a purely technical precaution to avoid the risk of ritual impurity that might not have been subject to the atonement of Yom Kippur, this perspective does not satisfactorily explain the wider application to the avodah in the heichal or the connection to comprehensive atonement.

Rav Hirsch understood this requirement to further cordon off the avodot of the innermost precincts not as a manifestation of elitism or a demand for greater privacy, but actually as an expression of the added relevance and impact of these locations to the rest of the mikdash structure and to the everyday life of Klal Yisrael. In his view, the adjacent venues were inherently linked with and therefore experienced the overflow impact of whatever occurred in the private precincts, and, consequently also needed to be cleared of

those who were not directly implementing the avodah. The purpose was not to further isolate or seclude the inner precincts or the elite avodah they hosted, but to acknowledge the fluidity-interconnection of all parts of the mikdash, which technically mandated a wider berth. It is inconceivable, in his view, that distancing the rest of the population was the purpose or goal of this imperative, as all dimensions of the avodah, even the most private, enhance all of the nation and connect to its daily mission in and out of the mikdash. The link between comprehensive atonement and the special role of the ketoret is consistent with this position.

We may posit another perspective to complement Rav Hirsch's approach. Netziv (Ha'amek Davar 16:17) links Chazal's view of the role of ketoret in neutralizing the pervasive transgression of gossip (lashon hara), the ultimate breach of privacy-tzeniut, with the special demand for a further layer of privacy. This idea is supported by the Gemara (Zevachim 88b), "ketoret mekaperet al lashon hara - yavo davar shebechashai ve-yekaper al ma'aseh chashai". Rashi (Zevachim 88b, Arachin 16a) specifically refers to the perishah requirement in this context.

A close analysis of the Gemarot in Yoma and the Rambam's rulings (Hilchot Temidim 3:3,9) establish that while there are other applications of this additional distancing condition, as noted, the primary focus of this special requirement is the ketoret. [See a summary of some of the evidence in Gevurat Yitzchak, ad loc, especially his citation of the Griz, and his analysis of the differences between ketoret and hazaot ha-dam.] Rambam codifies this demand specifically in Hilchot Temidim (not in Hilchot Bait Mikdash), in the framework of his treatment of ketoret (and Chinuch, likewise - no. 103). In that context, he expands to other applications, but in a manner that also accents subtle differences between the primary and secondary applications. The evidence demonstrates that the need for extra privacy, isolation during the ketoret offering is an internal factor and even part of the essential character and definition of this special avodah. Some posit that for this reason, the demand does not constitute and independent mitzvah, as it primarily constitutes a dimension of ketoret itself. Some mefarshim (Rinat Yitchak op cit) speculate that ignoring the adjacent evacuation requirement may even invalidate the ketoret!

The ketoret is perceived as an acutely spiritual form of avodah. The fact that it accentuates the more amorphous, ephemeral sense of smell is consistent with this status. It is hardly a coincidence that great religious crises that also test the boundaries of and relationship to material and spiritual Divine worship revolved around ketoret. Korah's insincere, cynical quest (machloket shelo lesheim shamayim - Avot) to vulgarize Jewish spiritual leadership, even the sacrificial order, anchored in the apparently noble but actually diluting value of "kol ha-edah kulam kedoshim", was decidedly defeated by ketoret. The tragic, sincere but misguided ketoret zarah offered by Nadav and Avihu is perceived by many views in Chazal as an effort to hyper-spiritualize avodat Hashem. Avodat Yom Kippur itself is introduced against the background of that tragic misconception - "achrei mot shenei benei Aharon be-karvatam lifnei Hashem va-yamutu" - as a corrective that both rejected and incorporated elements of that hyperspiritualization. Thus, "bezot yavo Aharon el ha-kodesh" charts a Divinely-guided balanced, multifaceted process presided over by Aharon ha-Kohen and those who will succeed him (16:3, 33). The centerpiece consists of an especially finely ground (dakah min ha-dakah) ketoret that accounts for two trips into the kodesh ha-kodoshim! The extensive protocols, including the oscillation between inner and outer precincts of the mikdash, and all that implies, protect and enable "ki be-anan eiraeh al ha-kapporet"!

It is unsurprising that this ultimate attainment, produced in the highly calibrated framework of five tevilot and ten kidushim, embodying dizzying wardrobe changes signifying the interaction of avodat penim and avodat chutz, engenders a need for excessive tzeniut - seclusion, that it constitutes an important dimension of this singular ketoret itself. Daily ketoret, also subject to this demand for isolation and exclusive presence, mandated and defined its own mizbeah, mizbeach ha-ketoret inside the heichal.

The dialectic between tzeniut- privacy-seclusion and a public posture and comprehensive impact is a singular feature of halachic life. Both methodologies are indispensable, and they need to be complementary to achieve complex, halachically aspirational goals. Chazal note that the first luchot were revealed in the presence of all of Klal Yisrael accompanied by thunder and lightning (kolot u-verakim), but the luchot that ultimately survived were the one's presented to Moshe in seclusion, embodying the quality of tzeniut. Our primary vehicle for prayer is the silent, highly personal, even intimate Amidah, although it is also followed by chazarat ha-shatz, a manifestation of tefillat ha-tzibur. The fact that the hazaot ha-dam and especially the ultra-refined Yom Kippur ketoret demand excessive seclusion and privacy notwithstanding and in conjunction with the public spectacle of avodat Yom Kippur is consistent with this broader phenomenon. Indeed, the selective appropriate manifestations of tzeniut and acute spirituality, exemplified by ketoret, ultimately facilitate comprehensive kapparah for each and all segments of Klal Yisrael - "vechiper baado ube'ad beito u-be'ad kol Kehal Yisrael."

Torah.Org Dvar Torah
by Rabbi Label Lam

Days of Knowledge

And he shall effect atonement upon the Holy of Holies, and he shall effect atonement upon the Tent of Meeting and upon the altar, and he shall effect atonement upon the kohanim and upon all the people of the congregation. All] this shall be as an eternal statute for you, to effect atonement upon the children of Israel, for all their sins, once each year. And he did as the Lord had commanded Moshe. (Vayikra 16:33-34)

Yom Kippur is a holy day. So much can be accomplished in that short window of time. What a difference a day can make, that is, if this golden opportunity is properly utilized.

It was many years ago and I was leaving the cozy confines of Yeshiva and the blessed coercion of a Torah community to venture into Manhattan to learn Torah with businessmen. I was greatly concerned about what effect that environment would have on my being. Just a few trips already had left me feeling irreparably stained. What would become of me if I would go there every day!?

It used to be that the great difference was whether or not one had a TV. but in the big city you are in the TV. You become a part of the group mind just by being there. What was I to do!?

I asked my Rebbe, Rabbi Ezriel Tauber ztl. He told me to go to the Mikvah every day. He pointed out to me where the Rambam waxes poetically and refers to the Mikvah as “Mei Daas” waters of knowledge!

It wasn’t an easy decision. It meant getting up earlier every day. I tried it a few times and I discovered that there was absolutely no comparison between the days I went to the Mikvah and the days I did not. It was as King Solomon said, “Yisron HaOhr Min HaChoshech- The advantage of light over dark.”

On the days I went to the Mikvah I was armed with purpose and purity and I felt like a hot knife slicing through butter. Based on my experience I decided to “jump in” (all puns intended). I started going every day without fail and it proved itself continuously to be worth the time and effort.

The year passed and the holy day of Yom Kippur arrived. I was feeling the whole day that I was missing something that had become a part of me. It is forbidden to bath on Yom Kippur. So the Mikvah is out of the question. Now most of the day had passed and with much heart wrenching effort. After davening continuously all day long, the Yeshiva took a brief twenty minute break before Neila.

I couldn’t resist the chance to express my feeling of lack, so I approached Rabbi Tauber

and I shared with him how I miss the Mikvah. He looked at me with a look that shouts and he said to me shocking words. "If you think you need the Mikvah today, you don't know what the whole day is about." I was devastated. Almost the entire day passed and I don't know what it's about. Then he explained, "You're in the Mikvah!" The Mishne in Yoma concludes with words from the Navi, "Mikvah Yisrael is HASHEM!"

The actual quote is, "Rabbi Akiva said: How fortunate are you, Israel; before Whom are you purified, and Who purifies you? It is your Father in Heaven, as it is stated: "And I will sprinkle purifying water upon you, and you shall be purified" (Ezekiel 36:25). And it says: "The ritual bath of Israel is HASHEM" (Jeremiah 17:13). Just as a ritual bath purifies the impure, so too, the Holy One, Blessed be He, purifies Israel."

On Yom Kippur we are Toveling in Yud and Hey and Vuv and Hey. This is the strongest universal cleansing agent possible. Just the idea that we are soaking ourselves in the ultra-holiness of the day and our Father our King is reaching worlds beneath His dignity and bathing us, separating the dirt from the person himself has proven enormously comforting ever since that brief exchange.

Also, believing this and understanding the dynamics of the day makes the cleansing process that much more effective. It removes those barriers separating us from HASHEM effectively converting the entire day and all days potentially into Y'mei Daas, that is days of Knowledge!

Yeshivat Har Etzion: Virtual Bet Midrash

The *Kohanim* and the People
***Sicha* of Harav Baruch Gigi**

The double *parasha* that we read this week represents the transition between the two halves of *Sefer Vayikra*. The first half, addressed to the *Kohanim*, contains the details of the sacrifices, along with the laws of ritual sanctity and purification. The second half of the *sefer* is addressed to *Am Yisrael* as a whole.

Our *parasha* opens by recalling the death of Aharon's sons. The commentators are divided as to when this *parasha* was conveyed. Did God tell all of this to Moshe on the day that Nadav and Avihu died, or at some later point? Either way, the Torah emphasizes at the beginning of the long unit detailing the service of the *Kohen Gadol* that the entire procedure is intended "so he will not die". So he will not die – unlike Nadav and Avihu. In order for him not to die, the text stipulates how he is to enter the *Kodesh Ha-Kodashim*. In this way, the description of the process that appears at the beginning of our *parasha* represents, on the simplest level, a *tikkun* (repair) for the sin of Nadav and Avihu.

In contrast, at the end of the unit regarding the service of the *Kohen Gadol*, there is an interesting twist. There, the whole process that has just been described is linked to Yom Kippur:

> And it shall be for you an everlasting statute, that in the seventh month on the tenth of the month you shall afflict your souls, and you shall do no manner of work – both the home-born and the stranger who dwells among you. (*Vayikra* 16:29)

Why does the Yom Kippur process of atonement and purification appear here? And what is the connection between Yom Kippur and repairing the sin of Nadav and Avihu?

Following the connection to Yom Kippur, there is a description of the execution of the service as described in the verses: "And he did as the Lord had commanded Moshe" (v. 34). The sin of Nadav and Avihu took place on the eighth day of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, in the month of Nissan. How could Aharon have carried out the Yom Kippur service at that time? Rashi resolves this discrepancy as follows:

> "And he did as the Lord had commanded…" – [meaning,] when Yom Kippur came, he performed this order of service. This is meant in praise of Aharon, who did not wear [the special white linen garments] for self-aggrandizement, but rather to fulfill the King's decree. (Rashi, ad loc.)

Rashi (along with his grandson, Rashbam) understands from the verse that Aharon carried out God's command when the proper time – Yom Kippur – came around. In this view, the verse notes Aharon's fulfillment of the command, which actually happened half a year after the death of Aharon's sons. In contrast, the Ramban interprets the verse as referring to the prohibitions contained in this unit:

> And what is meant by, "And he did as the Lord had commanded Moshe" is that Aharon carried out all that he was commanded to, and was careful for the rest of his life not to enter inside of the veil except on Yom Kippur, and on Yom Kippur he performed the sacrificial service, just as God had commanded Moshe. (Ramban, ad loc.)

According to the Ramban, Aharon's obedience to the command was expressed in his avoidance of entry into the *Kodesh Ha-Kodashim* so long as the necessary conditions accompanying such entry – the proper time and the required service – were not fulfilled.

Thus, according to Rashi and Rashbam, Aharon fulfilled God's command by **entering** the *Kodesh Ha-Kodashim* on Yom Kippur, while according to the Ramban, he fulfilled the command by **avoiding** entry at any time other than Yom Kippur.

Our *parasha* has two different themes. The first part of the *parasha* discusses Aharon's entry into the *Kodesh Ha-Kodashim*. Aharon is to enter, by Divine command, the same place where his sons died, and this will represent a repairing of the sin that his sons committed. The command comes after the death of his sons, with the aim of atoning for their sin. Hence, the emphasis in the text is understandable. He should not come at all times into the holy place; rather, he must come "*be-zot*," "thus" – under particular conditions – so that "he will not die."

Over the course of the *parasha*, this command assumes a public dimension. If Aharon does not enter the holy place as the representative of *Am Yisrael*, then he is not entitled to enter at all. He must make atonement for the entire nation, and only then can he enter. We have already quoted Rashi's comment at the end of this unit: "This is meant in praise of Aharon, who did not wear [the special white linen garments] for self-aggrandizement, but rather to fulfill the King's decree."

For what exactly is Aharon being praised? For fulfilling God's command? Surely that is a most elementary demand! Rather, an understanding of Rashi's interpretation must take into account this public dimension. Aharon did not wear the special garments for his own honor, but rather as the representative of the nation. His entire service in the *Mishkan*, including his entry into the innermost Holy of Holies, is facilitated and is imbued with its auspicious character only because he is the representative of the people.

Along with this theme – the repair for the sin of Nadav and Avihu – there is another that arises over the course of the *parasha*, and that is Yom Kippur: "And this shall be for you an everlasting statute," in order to make atonement for *Bnei Yisrael* once each year. Here the process is not depicted in terms of Aharon's entry into the *Kodesh Ha-Kodashim*, but rather as a process whose aim is atonement for *Bnei Yisrael*. The means for achieving this happens to involve the *Kohen Gadol* entering that holy place. Here, there is no specific reference to Aharon: And the *Kohen* who shall be anointed, and who shall be consecrated to minister in the *Kohen's* office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, the holy garments… (v. 32)

Here, too, the same public dimension is manifest. This time, the aim is not a repair for the sin of Nadav and Avihu, but rather for the sins of *Bnei Yisrael*: For on that day He will forgive you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. (v. 30)

This verse speaks of the purification and atonement of all of *Am Yisrael* from their sins on Yom Kippur. There is no mention of Aharon, nor any room for the particular sins of his sons.

What is the relationship between these two themes within the first unit of *Parashat Acharei-Mot*? What is the function of this unit, and what is its place in the transition between the first part of the *sefer*, which discusses the priestly caste, and the second part, which discusses the "kingdom of priests" that is *Am Yisrael*?

In fact, the two themes share an interesting connection: each represents the condition for the other. Aharon can come to the *Kodesh Ha-Kodashim* – but only as the representative of the nation. Unless he comes in this capacity and in this role, he is not permitted to enter. And atonement for the sin of Aharon's sons is possible only if Aharon comes and recognizes his public role amongst and in the midst of *Bnei Yisrael*.

On the other hand, atonement and purification for *Bnei Yisrael* are dependent on the actions of the *Kohen*. It is only by means of the *Kohen Gadol's* entry into the *Kodesh Ha-Kodashim* and the execution of his special service in all its detail (including the goats, the incense, etc.) that they achieve atonement.

In fact, this mutual relationship expresses the transition between the two parts of the *sefer*. The *Kohen* should not think that he is somehow superior to or in control of the nation. Only by maintaining a humble approach will he be able to enter without dying. At the same time, every individual Israelite knows that the actions of the *kohen* in the Temple will have a direct effect on his own personal standing. Without the service of the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur, that Israelite will remain stained with his sin and mired in his impurity.

This combination facilitates additional aims set forth in our *parasha*. A little later in *Parashat Acharei-Mot*, we find: And you shall observe My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live in them; I am the Lord. (*Vayikra* 18:5)

Here *Chazal* offer their famous teaching: "'He shall live in them' – but not die in them." This verse is cited by R. Akiva in support of his own position in opposition to Ben Petura. R. Akiva deduces from the verse that God's commandments are not meant to lead to the death of those who fulfill them.

The combination of the priestly caste and the nation, which achieves the same level of sanctity, allows for life, in the most fundamental sense of the word. On another level, it also allows proper social relations. The Ramban elaborates as follows:
Therefore the text says, "which, if a man does, he shall live in them" – for the laws were given for human life in the social order, and for human welfare, and so that a person will not harm his neighbor, nor kill him. And thus Yechezkel mentions in many places the judgments "which a person shall do and live by them." And concerning the *Shabbatot* he says that they are to be "a sign between Me and them," and likewise in *Nechemia* – "but they sinned against Your judgments, which, if a man does, he shall live by them"… (Ramban, ad loc.)

The *mitzvot* in our *parasha* lead not only to physical survival, but also to proper social relations. This represents the fulfillment of a need for social order, for peace between man and his fellow.

However, there is also another facet to it. These two aspects represent the bare physical minimum – the life of the individual and the life of a society. We aim for much more than that; we aim for sanctity. We must live a life of sanctity. Sanctity is the subject interwoven throughout the very next *parasha*, *Parashat Kedoshim*. It is manifest from the outset – with the declaration, "You shall be holy" – via the continuation – "you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy" – and all the way to the conclusion of the *parasha*: And you shall be holy unto Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the people, that you should be Mine. (*Vayikra* 20:26)
[Adapted by Immanuel Mayer; Translated by Kaeren Fish] *(This sicha was delivered on leil Shabbat, parashat Acharei Mot-Kedoshim 5772 [2012].)*

BS"D

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THE EXTRA BOOST TO PRAY

Living Emunah on Shidduchim by Rabbi David Ashear

We hear many stories of how people were granted salvations from Hashem as a direct result of their heartfelt tefillos. It is not easy to pray emotionally, day in and day out, especially after years of not seeing the hoped-for answers to their tefillos. Of course, we know that every tefillah is a mitzvah and will bring eternal rewards beyond anything we can comprehend, but we like to see results in this world as well. Sometimes, all people need is the right chizuk to give them an extra boost to pray the way they are supposed to. Hashem could help us with that, too.

Shevi* told me that she was listening to a class given by Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein. The rabbi mentioned that he once asked Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman for a berachah to open a dormitory for his girls' school. Rav Shteinman told him, "Who said it's the will of Hashem that you should have a dormitory?"

Some time passed, and it was becoming very difficult for Rabbi Wallerstein to make progress withthe girls. When they went home every evening, they would lose much of what they had gained during the day.

A year after his first visit, he went back to Rav Shteinman and said, "Please, give me a berachah for a dormitory. We need it so badly!" This time Rav Shteinman gave him a warm berachah for success.

"What is the difference between last year and this year that the rav gave me two such different responses?" Rabbi Wallerstein wondered aloud.

Rav Shteinman replied, "Last year, you said you wanted a dormitory. This year, you said you needed a dormitory. Just because you want something doesn't mean it is good for you. But if you really need it, Hashem will help."

Shevi was inspired by that lesson. She had been praying for years for her son to get married. He was having a hard time with shidduchim and it seemed that her prayers were not helping. After listening to Rabbi Wallerstein's class, she prayed Minchah that day with renewed strength.

She put all her emotions into the tefillah and told Hashem how much her son needed a shidduch. As she finished Aleinu Leshabei'ach, the phone rang. It was the shadchan with a new suggestion for her son.

Baruch Hashem, her son married the girl who was suggested that day. Shevi's tefillah emerged that afternoon from the depths of her heart; she just needed the right words of chizuk to bring it out of her.

The principal aspect of every tefillah is a person's heart and sincerity.

Someone told me a story he heard from Rabbi Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro about a forty-year-old woman we'll call Allyson, who had not yet found her zivug. A friend of hers suggested that she go to a rabbi for help. The rabbi they went to spoke only Hebrew, and since Allyson did not understand Hebrew, her friend translated. The rabbi told her to read perek 32, perek 38, perek 82, and perek 121 of Tehillim for thirty days straight.

On day thirty, she got engaged. Allyson called her friend to share the news and thank her for her help. Her friend wished her mazel tov and then asked, "I'm a little confused. I know you don't understand Hebrew, but you can read Hebrew?"

Allyson replied, "No, I can't read it, either." "So how did you read those perakim of Tehillim for the past thirty days?" asked her friend. Allyson replied, "I held the book of Tehillim close to me and I said with all my heart, 'Perek 32, perek 38, perek 82, and perek 121.' Then I asked Hashem, 'Please, send me my zivug.' I did that every day for thirty days and, baruch Hashem, I'm engaged!"

The main component of tefillah is our heart. If we're having trouble getting our heart into it, we should ask Hashem for help with that, too.

Rav Frand - Hashem As Our Father

Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org>

Thu, Apr 27, 2023 These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1247 – The Kiruv Workers Dilemma: Inviting Non Shomer Shabbos for a Shabbos Meal. Good Shabbos!

The pasuk in Parshas Acharei Mos says, "For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you, from all your sins before Hashem." (Vayikra 16:30). The Ribono shel Olam gives us one day out of the entire year to be forgiven from all our sins and to achieve tahara (purity). A very famous Mishna at the end of Maseches Yoma states: "Rabbi Akiva says: Fortunate are you O Israel – before whom are you purified and who purifies you? Your Father in Heaven. As it is written, 'I will sprinkle upon you pure waters' – so too the Holy One Blessed be He purifies you."

I recently received a sefer written by my fifth grade Rebbe, Rav Chaim Tzvi Hollander, entitled Zevach Mishpacha. Rabbi Hollander learned in the Telshe Yeshiva (Cleveland). He writes that they once heard a question from Rav Aharon Kotler: What is the meaning of "Ashreichem Yisrael" (fortunate are you O Israel) that the Ribono shel Olam washes you off and cleanses you? He asks, "Is this not a source of embarrassment and disgrace that the King of Kings needs to clean us off?"

Picture in your mind – someone becomes soiled and dirty. Should the king need to wash him off? Why is that "Ashreichem Yisrael?" The answer is your Father in Heaven. The Ribono shel Olam is not acting here as the King of Kings. He is acting as our Father in Heaven. Just like a father has no problem washing off a child who becomes dirty, and the child has no problem being washed by his father because that is what fathers do, so too, Israel is fortunate that they have this relationship with their Father in Heaven.

Then Rav Hollander makes a beautiful connection to a Gemara in Maseches Taanis (25b): There was an incident (during a time of drought) when Rabbi Eliezer led the tefilos. He recited 24 blessings (praying for rain) but he was not answered. Then Rabbi Akiva descended to lead the tefilos and said: "Our Father, our King, we have no King other than You. Our Father our King, for Your sake, have mercy upon us." Then it began to rain. Rabbi Akiva's prayer is in accordance with his opinion in Yoma that our relationship with the Master of the World is not only one of 'our King,' but it is also a relationship of 'our Father.'

What is the source of the Avinu Malkeinu prayer? The one who instituted this prayer was none other than Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva may not have

composed the entire Avinu Malkeinu – every stanza that we have today – but the essence of this tefilla is from Rabbi Akiva, as recorded in the Gemara in Taanis. Rabbi Akiva felt that the relationship between Klal Yisrael and the Ribono shel Olam is not only that of a Monarch-Subject, but also that of a Father-Child. It is Rabbi AKiva who teaches Ashreichem Yisrael – how lucky you are that you are cleansed by your Father in Heaven. In front of a father, there is nothing to be embarrassed about.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org

This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion.

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https://torah.org/torah-portion/ravfrand-5763-kedoshim/

Role of Spouse in Loving One's Neighbor

Parshas Kedoshim

Posted on May 1, 2003 (5763) By Rabbi Yissocher Frand

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 370, Deserts — Do They Require a Brocha? Good Shabbos!

The Role of the Spouse in Loving One's Neighbor

This week's parsha contains the famous pasuk [verse], "You shall not take revenge, and you shall not bear a grudge against the sons of your nation, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am Hashem." [Vayikra 19:18] The mitzvah of loving one's neighbor is the "great principle of the Torah" [JerusalemTalmud Nedarim 9:4].

The Rambam writes, in his definition of this mitzvah, that "we are commanded to love one another like we love ourselves." However, according to the Ramba"n, the Torah is not necessarily asking us to develop an emotion of love. Rather, the demand is that we treat people in a manner as if we loved them. According to either opinion, this mitzvah requires us to worry about people, be concerned about them, show them warmth and comfort, and provide them what they need — be it financial help, spiritual help, physical help, or emotional help.

A very basic question can be asked. How does a man fulfill the mitzvah of "loving his neighbor" with a woman? Half of all people are members of the "opposite sex." A woman is certainly considered "one's neighbor" in regards to this mitzvah. So very simply, one should ask, how are men able to fulfill this mitzvah of loving our "female neighbors," if there are obvious problems in providing the amount of concern and care and comfort one is supposed to provide in fulfilling this mitzvah, to a member of the opposite sex? The same question can of course be asked regarding how women can fulfill this mitzvah with regard to their male "neighbors."

Rav Shimon Schwab presents a novel insight, which I believe is very true. Rav Schwab suggests that the only way that a person can safely fulfill the mitzvah of loving one's neighbor with members of the opposite sex is through one's spouse.

We are all obligated to fulfill the 613 mitzvos. However, I, as a member of one of the non-Priestly Tribes, can obviously not offer sacrifices in the Bais HaMikdash [Temple]. As a non-Levi, I cannot accept Ma'aser [Tithes]. There is a concept in Judaism that we as a nation are a unit. Some of the mitzvos are fulfilled through Kohanim, descendants of the High Priest Aharon. Some are fulfilled through Levites, and so forth.

Rav Schwab wants to extend this concept. He argues that the mitzvah of "loving one's neighbor" as it applies to the universe of Jews can only be fulfilled as a husband-wife unit. The husband must serve in the role of "Avraham drew near to him the men" and the wife must serve in the role of "Sarah drew near to her the women."

Rav Schwab quotes a Zohar, which refers to the fact that "man without a wife is like half a body." This means that a person cannot reach full spiritual fulfillment in this world without a spouse. Part of the reason for this, Rav Schwab argues, is because the mitzvah of "loving one's neighbor like oneself" cannot be fully fulfilled without a spouse. This is a mitzvah that is assigned to the "couple." The man fulfills his part with other men, and the woman fulfills her part with other women.

By way of homiletics, Rav Schwab interprets the Gemara which forbids a person from becoming engaged to a woman until he sees her at least once 'lest he finds her to be unappealing' [Kiddushin 41a]. The Gemara concludes this prohibition with the words "and the Torah states 'You should love your neighbor as yourself.'" Why, Rav Schwab asks, does the Gemara add this postscript to the prohibition? Rav Schwab says that this alludes to the fact that if she is found unappealing and he divorces her — then he will never be able to properly fulfill the mitzvah of "Loving one's neighbor."

I mention this idea every once in a while because in American society — especially today in the secular world — there are absolutely no boundaries between the mingling of the sexes. People are in offices, in jobs, in social situations where they constantly have to mingle. There is absolutely no thought given to the time-honored Jewish value that the sexes should be separated. Unfortunately, many problems — which I do not have to elaborate upon — come about when there is too much intermingling between members of the opposite sex. Countless people have paid the price because they have not been judicious and careful in this area.

People assume that they are just being 'normal'. But biology and human nature being what they are, the Torah warns us that we have to build boundaries and fences for ourselves. If not physical boundaries and fences, there must at least be a certain "distance" and limitation — all within the context of civility and politeness — which allows us to constantly be on guard for the inherent dangers in socialization and the establishment of relationships between members of the opposite sex.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington. Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Yerushalayim.

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https://torah.org/torah-portion/ravfrand-5773-achareimos/

Who Has To Honor Whom?

Parshas Acharei Mos Kedoshim

By **Rabbi Yissocher Frand**

The beginning of Parshas Kedoshim contains a pasuk which presents a very interesting juxtaposition of mitzvot: "Every man shall revere his mother and his father and you shall observe My Sabbaths – I am Hashem your G-d." [Vayikra 19:3]. Rashi wonders about the connection between Shabbos observance and revering one's parents. Rashi cites the Toras Kohanim which teaches, based on the juxtaposition in this pasuk: "Although I enjoined you about revering a parent, if your parent should say to you, 'Desecrate the Shabbos', do not listen to them. And so too it is with regard to other commandments." This is a halachic principle brought down several times in the Talmud, which is also codified in the Shulchan Aruch.

Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky adds that the Torah is teaching us another message here as well. We believe as Jews that G-d created the world in six days and that on the seventh day He rested. Prior to Creation the world did not exist and obviously people did not exist. This "Creation scenario" is not universally accepted. There are many people who in fact deny any role of G-d in creation. The Darwinian Theory and others posit that human beings evolved from lower species and reject the "story of Creation" as spelled out in the beginning of the Book of Bereishis. This is a philosophical-theological dispute of how one views the world.

There is a practical difference between these two world views. The difference boils down to who needs to honor whom? Should older people need to honor younger people or should younger people need to honor older people? If one believes that man has evolved from the lower forms of life, then presumably the further one gets away from that "original man" the higher form of life one would expect. If man evolved from a monkey, then the first generations of men were not very far removed from monkeys. Later generations have "evolved more" than earlier ones and hence the earlier generations must honor the later ones. The bottom line is that parents should honor their children. If on the other hand, — as we believe — the Almighty

created the First Man, it follows that the First Man was the most perfect human being that the world has ever seen. He was without flaws because he was the handiwork of the Master of the Universe Himself. No one can improve upon that! As we get further away from that First Man, man diminishes in stature. If we are going down, rather than up, it is clear that the younger generations need to honor the previous generations.

With this introduction, the pasuk now is crystal clear. "A man shall revere his mother and his father." Why? It is because "My Sabbaths you shall keep – I am Hashem your G-d." There is a link between these two parts of the pasuk. Since there was a Creation – which you testify to by observance of Shabbos on the seventh day of the week, then parents who are a generation closer to creation and to the original man who was created by the Almighty need to be revered by the younger generation!

This insight of Rav Yaakov comes with a story as well. In his later years, Rav Yaakov attended a Kenesiah Gedolah of Agudas Yisroel in Eretz Yisrael. He was already an older man at the time and was accompanied on his travels by one of his sons. As we all know, the trip to Eretz Yisrael is a long trip and Rav Yaakov was an older man. His son waited on him hand and foot throughout the journey. There was a person on the plane sitting nearby who was astounded by the love, respect, and dedication the son was showing to his father. At one point, he commented to Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, "My children do not treat me like that. What is your secret in child-raising that your son treats you like a King?"

In effect, Rav Yaakov told him the above quoted idea. We implant in our children the belief that the further we are removed from Sinai, the more one has had to endure the phenomenon of "yeridas haDoros" [lessening of the generations]. Therefore, they understand that the older generation is a "better generation" and hence they honor and respect us. "If your children do not act this way", Rav Yaakov told the gentleman on the plane, "perhaps it is because they feel that they are more advanced than you are and that on the contrary, you should honor them."

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https://torah.org/torah-portion/**ravfrand**-5770-achareimos/

The Reason The Torah Prohibits Marrying Two Sisters

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 678, Tochacha: Is Ignorance Bliss? Good Shabbos!

Parshas Achrei Mos contains the list of forbidden sexual relationships. Vayikra 18:18 contains the Biblical prohibition for a person to marry his wife's sister. In expressing this prohibition, the Torah uses the word "litzror" [to make a co-wife].

The Ramba"n comments: This verb expresses the reason for this prohibition. Most of the forbidden relations (e.g. — mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, etc.) were simply forbidden without stating a reason. However, the Torah does state a reason by a sister-in-law, namely that it is inappropriate to make two sisters into co-wives of the same husband. These two women should ideally love one another. Placing them into a situation of rivalry will inevitably cause those who should have been best of friends to have a hostile relationship with one another.

The Ramba"n continues: The Torah does not state this regarding a daughter or mother of one's wife, because they remain forbidden even after his wife's death (unlike the situation with the sisters, where a sister is permitted to marry her brother-in-law if her sister — his first wife – dies). The Ramba"n distinguishes between the "ervah" of two sisters and that of other relations. Here the Torah did not forbid the marriage because of "ervah" but because of the social harm it would bring to the sibling relationship, which at any rate is subject to rivalry. To avoid aggravating that natural sibling rivalry to intolerable levels, the Torah forbade a man to simultaneously be married to two sisters. The proof that this prohibition is different than all the others (and that it is not because of "ervah" or "she'er basar" [close relationship] but for some other reason) is the very fact that the prohibition expires upon the death of one of the sisters.

We learn two novel ideas from this Ramba"n.

First, we see from the fact that the Torah includes this prohibition in the chapter of forbidden relationships (arayos) that the Torah treats the matter of causing sisters to hate one another with the same severity as it treats the cardinal sin of arayos.

Second, we see how important it is in the eyes of the Torah for children to get along with one another. The Torah bans two sisters from marrying the same person for the simple reason that the Torah does not want siblings to fight with each other. Whether we are ourselves siblings or whether we are parents who have children who are siblings, we all know that this is indeed a very big challenge.

Tidbits for Parashas Acharei Mos - Kedoshim
Ira Zlotowitz <Iraz@klalgovoah.org>
In memory of Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz ZT"L
Thu, Apr 27, 7:00 PM
Parashas Acharei Mos - Kedoshim • April 28th • 7 Iyar 5783
Reminders
Sefirah: On Friday night we count the 23rd day of the omer.
The series of fast days of BeHaB - a series of 3 fast days on the Monday ('Beis'), Thursday ('Hei') and subsequent Monday ('Beis') following the months of Nissan and Tishrei - begins this Monday, May 1st, and continues on Thursday, May 4th and Monday, May 8th. Many Shuls recite Selichos on these days. This Shabbos before Mussaf, a special Mi She'beirach is said for those fasting on these days. The reasons given for BeHaB include: 1) to atone for any sins that one may have committed over Yom Tov; 2) to atone for work performed over Chol Hamoed; 3) as an entreaty to Hashem that the change of seasons should not negatively affect our health.
At Maariv on this Tuesday, May 3rd, those davening Nusach Ashkenaz will have omitted Mashiv Haruach for the 90th time. Those davening Nusach Sefard will have included Morid Hatal for the 90th time during Minchah on Tuesday. After this point, one is considered accustomed to the new text, and does not repeat Shemoneh Esrei if he is unsure if he davened correctly.
Friday, May 5th, is Pesach Sheni. Many do not say Tachanun; even so, many still recited Tachanun on Thursday at Minchah. Some have the minhag to eat matzah. Pesach Sheini provided a second opportunity for those who were unable to bring the Korban Pesach on time (14th of Nissan) to do so on this date.
The final opportunity for Kiddush Levana is Friday early morning, May 4th at 2:09 AM EST.
Pirkei Avos: Chapter 3.
Daf Yomi - Erev Shabbos: Bavli: Sotah 30. Daf Yerushalmi: Pe'ah 72.
Mishnah Yomis: Pesachim 10:9, Shekalim 1:1.
Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rebbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to do the same.
Summary
ACHAREI MOS: Avodas Yom Kippur • Fasting on Yom Kippur • Prohibition of eating blood • Laws of Arayos • Prohibition of sacrificing a child to Molech • See Taryag Weekly for the various mitzvos.
KEDOSHIM: Be holy • Korban of Asham Shifcha Charufa • Do not profane your child and defile the land • Love the Ger • Punishment for Molech worshipers and for silent bystanders • Forbidden relations • Our holiness and the resulting higher standard to which we are held • See Taryag Weekly for the various mitzvos.
Haftarah (the haftarah of Acharei Mos is leined): The end of Sefer Amos (9:7-15) discusses how, despite the lengthy exile, the Jewish identity remains distinct. The haftarah ends with the promise that Hashem will restore us to our heritage in Eretz Yisrael, never to be uprooted again.
For the Shabbos Table
Parashas Acharei Mos • 80 Pesukim • 2 Obligations • 26 Prohibitions
1) A Kohen may not enter the Beis Hamikdash unnecessarily. 2) The Kohen Gadol shall perform the Yom Kippur service. 3) Do not slaughter offerings outside the Mikdash. 4) Cover the blood of a chaya or a bird after slaughter.

5) Forbidden relations include any form of intimate touch. 6-19) Prohibition on relations with one's: father, mother, father's wife, sister, son's daughter, daughter's daughter, daughter, father's daughter, father's sister, mother's sister, father's brother, father's brother's wife, daughter-in-law, brother's wife. 20-23) Prohibition of relations with a mother and her daughter, a woman and her son's or daughter's daughter, or with one's wife's sister during his wife's lifetime. 24) Prohibition of relations with a niddah. 25) Do not sacrifice a child to Molech. 26) Prohibition of mishkav zachar. 27-28) Prohibition of beastiality.

Parashas Kedoshim • 64 pesukim • 13 Obligations • 38 Prohibitions

1) Fear your parents. 2-3) Do not recognize or manufacture idols. 4) Do not eat Nossar (leftovers) from a Korban. 5-6) Do not harvest a field entirely; leave a Pe'ah area for the poor. 7-12) Do not gather remnants of the harvest or vineyard, as well as the small grapes; leave them for the poor. 13) Do not steal covertly. 14-15) Do not deny or swear falsely about financial claims. 16) Do not swear falsely in Hashem's Name. 17) Do not retain others' possessions forcibly. 18) Do not steal openly. 19) Do not withhold wages. 20) Do not curse anyone, even a deaf man. 21) Do not "place a stumbling block before the blind" by giving bad advice. 22) Do not corrupt the judicial process. 23) Do not treat litigants unequally. 24) Judge people favorably. 25) Do not speak Lashon Hora. 26) Do not stand by when another's life is in jeopardy. 27) Do not harbor hatred against a fellow Jew. 28-29) Deliver effective rebuke; do not rebuke in an embarrassing manner. 30-31) Do not exact revenge or harbor vengeful resentment. 32) Love your friend like yourself. 33-34) Do not crossbreed livestock or plants. 35) Do not benefit from a tree's first-3-years' produce. 36) Eat a tree's 4th year fruit in Yerushalayim. 37) Do not eat in the gluttonous manner of a ben sorer umoreh. 38-39) Do not act based on omens or lucky times. 40) Do not cut off peyos of the head. 41) Do not shave a beard with a razor. 42) Do not tattoo. 43) Revere the Temple. 44) Do not inquire about the future by means of the occult. 45) Do not engage in necromancy. 46) Stand up for Torah scholars and elders. 47-48) Do not use inaccurate tools of measurement in business; ensure that they are accurate. 49) Do not curse parents. 50) Beis Din should mete out the punishment of sereifa. 51) Do not follow the lowly ways of the nations.

"וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ" "Say to them "you shall be holy" (Vayikra 19:2)

The parashah begins by stating the importance of a Jew living a life of holiness. Yet, the parashah continues and discusses many mitzvos that, perhaps, would seem to be intuitive in any ethical society such as honoring parents and the prohibitions against thievery and falsehood. Why are these mitzvos considered to be those of holiness?

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains that a mitzvah is a tzivui, a command, and a Jew performs a mitzvah not because he perceives it as moral and correct but rather because that is what he was commanded by Hashem. Even mitzvos between man and his fellow man which seem ethical and necessary for society must not be followed out of fairness but rather because this is Hashem's will and we exist to serve Him. (Kol Ram)

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from: **Rav Immanuel Bernstein** <ravbernstein@journeysintorah.com>
date: Apr 27, 2023, 7:00 AM subject: Pshuto Shel Mikra in Acharei Mos PSHUTO SHEL MIKRA From the Teachings of Rav Yehuda Copperman zt"l PARSHAT ACHAREI MOT Pshuto Shel Mikra Teaches Halachah LeSha'ah

Introduction We have seen that whenever the pshat appears to give us an interpretation that differs from the halachah as we know it, we proceed to ask, "What is it that the pshat is teaching us, if it is not teaching us halachah?" The answer to that question will reveal a message that is part of the shleimut of Torah, even if it is not the halachah itself. In this chapter we will see that sometimes the pshat differs from the halachah, yet still it reflects halachah! How can this be? This brings us to the discussion of halachah lesha'ah — a halachah that was stated regarding a specific time.[1]

Avodat Yom HaKippurim — The "Order" Written Out of Order! The first topic dealt with in Parshat Acharei-Mot is the Avodah of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. And yet, as we will see, specifically in this perek — which is meant to tell us the sequence of the Avodah — Chazal inform us that there are pesukim that are written out of order! וּבָא אַהֲרֹן אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּפָשַׁט אֶת בִּגְדֵי הַבָּד אֲשֶׁר לָבַשׁ בְּבֹאוֹ אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְהִנִּיחָם שָׁם Aharon shall come to the Ohel Moed (Mishkan), he shall remove the linen garments that he wore when he entered the Sanctuary, and he shall leave them there (Vayikra 16:23).

Chazal (Yoma 32a) ask why the Kohen Gadol is returning to the Ohel Moed at this point in the Avodah, and explain that it is to remove the ladle and shovel with which he had brought ketoret into the Kodesh HaKodashim earlier (as referred to in pesukim 12–13). Regarding this, Chazal comment, "for the entire parsha is written in order, except for this pasuk."

Before we try and clarify what we are meant to learn from this "incorrect" order of pesukim, since, after all, "ain mikra yotzei midei pshuto," and pshuto shel mikra requires us to read the pesukim in the order in which they are written, we must first understand the basis upon which Chazal determined that this pasuk describing the second visit of Aharon to the Kodesh HaKodashim is written out of order. At the root of the matter lies Kabbalat Chazal, an oral tradition received by Chazal, which states that during the Avodah on Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol immersed himself in the mikveh five times and washed his hands and feet (kiddush yadayim veraglayim) ten times. The matter that requires each tevilah (and, additionally, washing the hands and feet both before and after) is when the Kohen Gadol changes into bigdei zahav (lit. golden garments — his regular garments, which contain gold threads) or into bigdei lavan (lit. white garments — the special garments for Yom Kippur made entirely of white linen). Were the order of the Avodah to follow the order of the pesukim, there would only be three such changes (gold, white, and gold), and hence only three immersions in the mikveh and six washings of the hands and feet. In order to arrive at a total of five changes of garments, we must "detach" pasuk 23 from where it was written and place it at the end of the parsha, after pasuk 28. In this way there will be two more changes of clothing (from white to gold and from gold to white), which will then give us two more immersions and four more washings of the hands and feet.

Rashi's Words of Clarification Rashi, in his comments on our pesukim, explains the matter in his characteristic clear manner (pasuk 23, s.v. u'pashat):

The entire parsha is written in order except for this [second] entrance [to the Kodesh HaKodashim], which actually took place after Aharon brought his olah and the olah of the people, and offered the sacrificial parts of the bull and goat, all of those things being done while wearing the bigdei Zahav. Then he immerses in the mikveh, washes his hands and feet, removes those garments, and wears the bigdei lavan in order to remove the ladle and shovel with which he had offered ketoret in the Kodesh HaKodashim. He then removes the bigdei lavan and wears bigdei Zahav for the afternoon korban tamid. Here is the Seder Ha'Avodah: The morning tamid — wearing gold. The avodot of the bull and goat inside the Kodesh HaKodashim, as well as offering the ketoret there — wearing white. Offering the Kohen's ram and the ram of the people, plus offering some of the mussafim — wearing gold. Removing the ladle and the shovel from the Kodesh HaKodashim — wearing white. Offering the rest of the mussafim and the afternoon tamid, plus the ketoret of the Heichal on the Inner Mizbei'ach — wearing gold.

In terms of the order of the Avodah, the order of the pesukim would be as follows: Sending away the goat to the wilderness (pasuk 22). Immersing in the mikveh (pasuk 24). Offering his olah, the olah of the people, and all the items mentioned in the subsequent four pesukim (pesukim 24–28). And then returning to remove the ladle and the shovel (pasuk 23).

The Vilna Gaon — The Seder Ha'Avodah According to Pshat Now let us return to our question. If in fact the Kohen Gadol actually requires five tevilot, why does the Torah write it as if he only needs three, which then requires us to move a pasuk from its "incorrect" place, when we do not understand what it was doing there in the first place! Or, to put it in the words of the Chochmat Adam, "Is the Torah not able to order the pesukim as Rashi did?" This is in essence a very extreme way of phrasing the question,

"Madua — Why?" As we have explained on a number of occasions, the question of "madua" follows the question of "keytzad — how?" When the Midrash of Chazal differs from pshuto shel mikra, we first ask [Chazal], "Keytzad — How did you know to expound the pasuk in the way that you did?," and then we ask [Hashem, so to speak], "Madua — Why did You dictate to Moshe a pasuk whose pshat differs from the way in which You explained the halachah to him?"

The Chochmat Adam, the Gaon Rav Avraham Danzig,[2] gives the following answer:

It appears to me, based on what I heard from the Gaon and Chassid Moreinu HaRav Eliyahu of Vilna … based on a statement of the Midrash Rabbah in our parsha (21:7), "Said Rav Yudan bar Simon, Moshe suffered great distress when he was told regarding Aharon "וְאַל יָבֹא בְּכָל עֵת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ — he shall not enter the Kodesh [HaKodashim] at all times" (pasuk 2). A "time" (עת) might mean an hour, a day, a year, twelve years, seventy years, forever! Said Hashem to Moshe, 'It is not as you think … rather, whenever he wants he may enter, provided he enters with the following order (of korbanot).'"

We see from here that it is specifically later Kohanim Gedolim who are restricted from entering the Kodesh HaKodashim aside from on Yom Kippur. Aharon, however, was able to enter at any time, provided he did so accompanied by the korbanot mentioned in the parsha. According to this, we see that the Torah was most precise with the order of the pesukim, for the reason the Gemara said that pasuk 23 is written "out of order" is as a result of the kabbalah that the Kohen Gadol needs five tevilot on Yom Kippur, whereas in the pesukim as they are written we find only three. However, this is only in regard to Yom Kippur, when we have this tradition handed down to Moshe at Sinai that he needs five tevilot. However, with regards to Aharon being able to enter on other days of the year, there is no such requirement. This being the case, he only needed to immerse three times, as per the order that the pesukim are written in the parsha. And if this is the case, then the pasuk of "Aharon shall enter" (pasuk 23) is written in order, in regard to Aharon on any other day of the year!

Resolving Questions in Pshuto Shel Mikra Having quoted the interpretation of the Vilna Gaon, the Chochmat Adam then shows how this approach will not only explain how the pesukim may be read in order, but will also resolve some very basic questions that relate to pshuto shel mikra in our perek: Based on the above distinction between Aharon and subsequent Kohanim Gedolim, we can understand why there is no mention at all of Yom Kippur at the beginning of the parsha; rather, it is only mentioned at the end! Every parsha of the korbanot for a Moed begins first by mentioning the date of the Moed and then saying which korbanot are to be brought on that day. Why is Avodat Yom Kippur different? The answer is, since lefi pshuto this parsha reflects the seder of Aharon on any day of the year, Yom Kippur is not mentioned. It is only at the end of the parsha that the Torah states that this Seder Ha'Avodah is required for all subsequent generations on Yom Kippur.

We can further understand why it is that throughout this perek the Torah refers to "Aharon," whereas in the final pesukim it no longer mentions his name, but rather "the Kohen who shall be anointed [Kohen Gadol]." This is because these final pesukim are no longer dealing with the Avodah in the Mishkan that could be done by Aharon on any day, but rather with Yom HaKippurim LeDorot, which is done by the Kohen Gadol.

The final words of the perek (pasuk 34) read, "וַיַּעַשׂ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה — and [Aharon] did as Hashem commanded Moshe." These words seem superfluous, for is it not obvious that Aharon would do as Hashem commanded Moshe?[3] According to the Vilna Gaon, these words can be understood lefi pshuto — namely, that although Yom Kippur was yet months away, Aharon immediately began to enter the Kodesh HaKodashim, as he was entitled to, provided he followed the Seder Ha'Avodah as mentioned in the parsha. We thus have before us two distinct categories regarding entering the Kodesh HaKodashim. Aharon, who may enter at any time during the course of the year, provided he brings the korbanot mentioned in the parsha.

The Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur LeDorot (including Aharon on in the Midbar), accompanied by the special Seder Ha'Avodah received by Chazal (five tevilot).[4] The approach of the Vilna Gaon is also found in the peirush Haamek Davar of the Netziv, as if it is practically self--understood from the pesukim themselves (pasuk 23, s.v. u'va):

According to the pshat, the pasuk is referring specifically to Aharon, that is, if he wants to enter the Ohel Moed, it must be after all these preparations. However, all this is only true regarding Aharon, but for subsequent generations, the pasuk must be understood as referring to "removing the ladle and the shovel," as the Gemara explains.

Why Was the Halachah Different in Aharon's Time? We have seen regarding the opening section of Acharei-Mot that halachah lesha'ah is expressed by pshuto shel mikra, whereas halachah ledorot is derived through Torah SheBaal Peh. However, we still need to explain why, when it comes to the Avodah of Yom Kippur, would Aharon's status in the Midbar be any different than that of the Kohen Gadol LeDorot? In answering this question, the Meshech Chochmah (Vayikra 16:3) refers to us a comment of the Seforno at the end of Parshat Emor (ibid., 24:3, s.v. ya'aroch oto Aharon). There, the Seforno addresses the fact that although the lighting of the Menorah does not need to be done by a Kohen Gadol specifically, nonetheless, the pasuk makes specific reference to Aharon when it describes the lighting:

Even though kindling the lights of the Menorah can be done by a regular Kohen (hedyot) in subsequent generations, nonetheless, the pasuk refers to Aharon. For indeed, the entire time that B'nei Yisrael were in the Midbar, the level of the Mishkan was that which would be achieved in subsequent generations [only] on Yom Kippur. Therefore, it was fitting that the kindling of the lights be done by the Kohen Gadol, as is the case LeDorot on Yom Kippur. Based on the Seforno, the Meshech Chochmah explains how it was possible for Aharon to enter the Kodesh HaKodashim at any time, not just on Yom Kippur, for during the time of the Midbar, the Mishkan was on the madreigah of Yom Kippur on an ongoing basis!

The Meshech Chochmah then goes further and explains not only how it was possible for Aharon to enter at any time, but also why it was necessary. After all, if the Torah indicates that Aharon could enter at any time, it seems as if there was in fact a need for him to do so:

As long as Yisrael were in the Midbar, it was forbidden for them to eat basar taavah (ordinary meat that was not a korban), which means that they were constantly eating meat that was Kodesh. This meant that tumah of the Mikdash and Kodesh items was much more prevalent, and thus required kaparah more frequently. This is why Aharon would enter "בְּכָל עֵת — at any time" with the Avodah prescribed for the day, in order to atone for tumah of the Mikdash and Kodesh items.

We should note that although the Meshech Chochmah has provided a potential source for the approach of the Vilna Gaon, the two might not be exactly the same. The Vilna Gaon seems to be saying that the possibility of Aharon entering the Kodesh HaKodashim is a function of the unique status of Aharon. The Meshech Chochmah, on the other hand, explained that it is a function of the unique status of the Mishkan in the Midbar. In case we think that these are two ways of saying the same thing, we should remind ourselves that for the final eight months of our time in the Midbar, it was Aharon's son, Elazar, who was Kohen Gadol. What was Elazar's status? Was he also able to enter at any time? Here it would appear that the two approaches part ways. If it was Aharon who was unique, as the words of the Gaon seem to indicate, then Elazar would be like any subsequent Kohen Gadol, and could only enter on Yom Kippur. However, according to the Meshech Chochmah, the determining factor is the madreigah of the Mishkan in the Midbar, and this madreigah continued to exist during those final eight months, when Elazar was Kohen Gadol.

A Source in the Gemara for Halachah LeSha'ah Following the approach of the Vilna Gaon, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky writes in his peirush Emet L'Yaakov (Vayikra 16:2, s.v. v'al):

It is possible that he [the Gaon] derived this from the fact that the Gemara (Gittin 60a) states that eight parshiyot were given over on the day the Mishkan was erected and lists one of them as the parsha of Avodat Yom

HaKippurim. Rashi there senses a difficulty with this and comments, “Even though this parsha applies to Yom Kippur,[5] nonetheless it was said on that day.” However, according to the explanation of the Vilna Gaon, it is well understood, for in reality the parsha did not apply only to Yom Kippur; rather, whenever Aharon wished to enter the Kodesh HaKodashim he would need to perform the Seder Ha’Avodah that was required on Yom Kippur, therefore it was said on that (first) day.

In the Future Let us take this discussion one stage further and ask a most interesting question: Is it possible that the ability to enter the Kodesh HaKodashim on a day other than Yom Kippur will ever return?

Rav Meir Don Plotzki, the author of Kli Chemdah on the Torah, writes (beginning of Parshat Acharei-Mot):

It seems to me that even though this special level existed only in connection with Aharon, whereas any other Kohen Gadol was not allowed to enter the Kodesh HaKodashim except on Yom Kippur, nonetheless, since we see that Aharon was able to enter whenever he wanted if accompanied by this Avodah, and similarly in the future [at the time of Techiyat HaMeitim] when Moshe and Aharon will return, Aharon will [once again] be allowed to enter accompanied by this Seder Ha’Avodah. It is with regards to other Kohanim, whose level is not as great, that the Torah writes that they “may not enter at any time” except for on Yom Kippur. If so, it appears that these korbanot are not to be classified as “chovat hayom” — obligations of the day of Yom Kippur per se; rather, they are the korbanot that are a necessary accompaniment for anyone who is eligible to enter the Kodesh HaKodashim.

In other words, pshuto shel mikra (“With this Aharon shall enter the Kodesh”) teaches us that this special Seder Ha’Avodah (korbanot, tevilot, washing of the hands and feet) is in essence a requirement of entering the Kodesh HaKodashim and not a requirement of Yom Kippur; it is just that it is an Avodah that must be performed once a year — on Yom Kippur. If so, then instead of referring to the “Seder Ha’Avodah of Yom Kippur,” it may be more correct to refer to the “Seder Ha’Avodah of entering the Kodesh HaKodashim.”

During the time B’nei Yisrael were in the Midbar, the level of kedushah was so great throughout the course of the year that a Kohen Gadol who was on the level of Aharon (and perhaps Elazar)[6] could enter the Kodesh HaKodashim whenever he wanted, accompanied by the Seder Ha’Avodah as set forth according to pshuto shel mikra. From that point onward (after B’nei Yisrael entered the Land), in the absence of that special level of kedushah on the one hand, and the absence of a Kohen Gadol as holy as Aharon on the other, entering the Kodesh HaKodashim became restricted to once a year, on the unique day of Yom Kippur, while the Seder Ha’Avodah changed to five tevilot instead of three.

Nevertheless, the Kli Chemdah states that in the future it will once again be possible for Aharon to enter at any time. Moreover, according to the approach of the Meshech Chochmah based on the Seforno, we see that the level of kedushah in the Mishkan on a normal weekday was equal to the kedushah that existed in the Beit Hamikdash on Yom Kippur. If so, then this level will certainly exist in the Third Beit Hamikdash, whose level of kedushah, the Seforno (Parshat Pekudei) tells us, will be greatest of all, and the Kohen Gadol will enjoy the same status of Aharon HaKohen, with all that that implies.

Thus we have before us a unique situation where pshuto shel mikra reflects the halachah as it applied lesha’ah (in the Midbar), but not ledorot (after entering the Land); nonetheless, it may also reflect a possible expression of halachah lemaaseh in the future, with the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash.

[1] In contrast to halachah ledorot — halachah that applies to all future generations, which will be discussed in the following chapter. [2] [Author of Chayei Adam. This discussion quoted here is found in the section at the end of the sefer Chochmat Adam entitled Matzevet Moshe]. [3] [See Rashi’s comment there.]. [4] There is in fact a third category, as discussed in the Torat Kohanim (Parshat Acharei-Mot 1:6), namely, Moshe, who is able to enter the Kodesh HaKodashim whenever he wants without any Seder Ha’Avodah, for “Aharon may not enter at any time [without korbanot], but Moshe may enter at any time” (Torat Kohanim ibid.). [5] [Whereas the Mishkan was set up on the first day of Nissan, six months before Yom Kippur.]. [6] [The Kli Chemdah quoted above made specific reference to Aharon; however, the Rav is leaving open the possibility that the determining factor was the time in the Midbar, which would then also include Elazar.].

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from: **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky** <rmk@torah.org> to: drasha@torah.org date: Apr 26, 2023, 12:42 PM subject: Drasha - Sweet **Revenge**

By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha

Parshas Kedoshim

Sweet Revenge

A verse in his week’s portion reminds me of a terse retort that American politician, Senator Henry Clay, made to his antagonist, Virginia’s John Randolph, right before their infamous duel in April of 1826.

The two were walking toward each other on a narrow footpath, with little room to pass. One would have to give way. “I never make room for scoundrels,” sneered Randolph.

“I always do,” Clay smiled as he stepped off the paved path to let Randolph pass.

In commanding us not to revenge nor bear grudges, the Torah alludes to two distinct character flaws.

“You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your fellow as yourself — I am Hashem” (Leviticus 19:18).

What does the Torah mean, ” You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge,” what is the difference?

Rashi explains: If Joe says to David “Lend me your sickle”, and David replies, “No!”, and the next day David says to Joe, “Lend me your hatchet”, and Joe retorts, “I am not going to lend it to you, just as you refused to lend me your sickle” – this is avenging; and what is “bearing a grudge”? Rashi continues. “If Joe says to David, “Lend me your hatchet”, and David replies “No!” and on the next day David says to Joe “Lend me your sickle”, and Joe replies “Here it is; I am not like you, because you would not lend me” – this is called “bearing a grudge” because he retains enmity in his heart although he does not actually avenge himself.”

In both cases, the avenger and the grudge bearer have committed a sin. They have transgressed a negative commandment of the Torah.

But what about the initial denial of the loan? What is the punishment for the men who initially refused to lend their sickles or hatchets? Neither punishment, nor even a warning is issued to them. Why is the grudgingly generous man treated worse than the outright denier of kindness and sharing?

A famous tale that circulates among disparate fund-raisers, goes as follows: The Rabbi came to the millionaire in search of a contribution for his Yeshiva. The man took him in warmly, but after the rabbi made his pitch, the man began a semi-tirade.

“Do you know that I have a brother that is in a wheelchair? His five children have no means of support!” The rabbi shook his head, apologetically. “And,” continued the magnate, “Did you know that I have a nephew with 12 children in Israel?

The rabbi began to stammer; he was unaware of all these obligations. The rich man cut him short. My mother is still alive in a nursing home that charges 1200 dollars a week! And my sister’s home just burnt down and they have no place to live!’

The rabbi began backing away sure that there was surely no funds left for his’s Yeshiva, but the broad grin on the man’s face stopped him. “And,

Rabbi," continued the mogul, "I don't give a penny for any one of them, so why in the world should I give something to you?

The Chofetz Chaim explains:=A0 The Torah's objective in this mitzvah is to train us not to be hateful or spiteful. Cheap is cheap.And it's tough to do something about that. It is a character flaw, but it is not hatred. Some of the nicest most warm, friendly even loving people do not like to give or lend. They will offer you their ear, their home and their time. They just will not give something that they physically possess. The Torah, does not deal with them the same way as the person who would be generous, but for the animus in his heart, or the one who does give, but, his openhandedness is shrouded snide remarks, and a harbor of hate. That overbearing enmity, despite his tainted giving is worthy of a Torah transgression.

Though the Torah tries to get us to control our emotional responses, it is more important for us to be kind, loving, and compassionate than generous with a hateful heart.

Dedicated by Dr. and Mrs. Keith Staiman — L'Rfuah Shlaimah Yehuda Boruch ben Sora Menucha

Good Shabbos!

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from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com>
date: Apr 25, 2023, 11:03 AM
subject: Torah Musings Daily Digest for 04/25/2023

Archaeological Evidence of Solomon and Sheba?
Scholar identifies South Arabian inscription in Jerusalem
Nathan Steinmeyer

Solomon and Sheba

A connection between Solomon and Sheba? Is this seven-letter inscription evidence of a possible trade network? Courtesy Daniel Vainstub; all rights reserved © Dr. Eilat Mazar.

The story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba is one of the more intriguing accounts found within the narrative of Solomon's reign (1 Kings 10). Yet the lack of clear archaeological or historical evidence for early trade or political connections between ancient Judah and South Arabia has led many scholars to question the account's reliability. Now, a study published in the Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology suggests that a small inscription from the excavations at Jerusalem's Ophel may provide just such proof.

Solomon and Sheba: A New Proposal

Discovered in 2012 during excavations at the Ophel by the late Eilat Mazar, the small inscription, which includes just seven letters, has puzzled scholars for years. While most have assumed the inscription is written in Canaanite, Daniel Vainstub of Ben-Gurion University now believes it is written in an Ancient South Arabian script known as Sabaic, the language of the ancient kingdom of Saba (biblical Sheba) in the area of modern Yemen.

Ophel

View of the Ophel excavation area as seen from the Mount of Olives. Courtesy Nathan Steinmeyer.

Dated to the tenth century BCE—the time of the biblical King Solomon—the inscription could provide evidence of trade connections between ancient South Arabia and Jerusalem during this early period. According to Vainstub, the inscription contains three full or partially preserved words: [ ]šy ldn 5. (Vainstub believes the South Arabian letter ḫ was used to designate the number 5.) Intriguingly, the second word, which Vainstub reads as ladanum, is a type of resin possibly to be identified with onycha, one of the ingredients used to create incense burned at the tabernacle (Exodus 30:34).

The inscription was engraved below on a large Judahite-style storage jar. Although only fragments of the jar were preserved, the profile suggests it originally held around 30 gallons, or 5 ephahs, the standard volume measure in ancient Judah. According to Vainstub, this suggests that the number 5 within the inscription indicates the amount of resin that was held by the jar. Given that the Sabaic inscription was made before the jar was fired, it was likely written by a native Sabaean, possibly even someone living in Jerusalem. As posited by Vainstub, this suggests "that a Sabaean functionary entrusted with aromatic components of incense was active in Jerusalem by the time of King Solomon."

Solomon and Sheba: The Linguistic and Epigraphic Debate

Not everyone is convinced by Vainstub's reading or interpretation, however. "Which is more likely, that we have in this Jerusalem inscription the Canaanite script, which is well attested in the Levantine world, or that we have a tenth-century early Arabian script?" cautioned Christopher Rollston, Professor of Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures at George Washington University, in a communication with Bible History Daily. "I would suggest that even if we believe that this inscription refers to some aromatic, it still makes the most sense simply to say that it was a Canaanite inscription about an aromatic spice. After all, the Levantine world was certainly interested in incense, and this piece of pottery is a locally made pot!"

Vainstub, however, is undeterred by such criticism. "In my opinion, the inscription cannot be considered Canaanite," told Bible History Daily. "For ten years, researchers intended unsuccessfully to read it as a coherent text in Canaanite." As Vainstub points out, several letters are quite difficult to understand as Canaanite, while one letter (the ḫ which designates the number 5) can "by no means fit any Canaanite letter, but fits exactly the Ancient South Arabian ḫ."

Other questions regarding Vainstrub's reading remain. One problem is the close similarity between the Sabaic and Canaanite scripts and the fact that the Ancient South Arabian script of the first millennium BCE was born of the earlier Canaanite script. Thus, while Vainstrub's interpretation is possible, there is little way for epigraphers to know for certain.

Solomon and Sheba: Ancient Trade

But if Vainstub's interpretation is correct, the small inscription—discovered just 300 yards from the presumed location of Solomon's Temple—could offer important evidence of early trade connections between Judah and South Arabia and, therefore, the historicity of the biblical story of Solomon and Sheba. solomon and sheba

Proposed reconstruction of the trade route. Courtesy Daniel Vainstub.

Over the past decades, archaeological and textual evidence from the Sabaean kingdom has provided a great deal of new information about the ancient Yemeni civilization. According to the press release from the Hebrew University:

During the 10th century BCE, the Kingdom of Sheba thrived as a result of the cultivation and marketing of perfume and incense plants, with Ma'rib as its capital. They developed advanced irrigation methods for the fields growing the plants used to make perfumes and incense. Their language was a South Semitic one. King Solomon is described in the Bible as controlling the trade routes in the Negev, which Sabaean camel caravans carrying perfumes and incense plants passed through on their way to Mediterranean ports for export.

If such a trade network existed by the tenth century, control over this trade could have been one of the main reasons for Pharaoh Sheshonq's (biblical Shishak's) campaign into the southern Levant during the reign of Solomon's son and successor, Rehoboam.

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from: **Rabbi Chanan Morrison** <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>
date: Apr 27, 2023, 4:33 AM
subject: **Rav Kook on Kedoshim: Holiness in Fruit**

Rav Kook Torah

Kedoshim: Holiness in Physical Pleasure

"For three years the fruit shall be Orlah, and may not be eaten. In the fourth year, all of the fruit shall be holy, for praisisng God." (Lev. 19:23-24)

The Talmud in Berachot 35a quotes this verse as the source for reciting a blessing over food: "'Holy, for praising God' - this teaches that [fruit and other foods] require a blessing before and after eating."

The key word, Rav Kook noted, is kodesh - holiness. Even when we eat, even as we partake of worldly pleasures, we should be able to uncover holiness.

Holiness from physical pleasure?! How is that possible?

An Opportunity for Holiness

What is a brachah? When we recite a blessing, we express our recognition that God is the ultimate Source of all pleasure. But there is a joy that is far greater than the sensory pleasures experienced when consuming food.

Eating is more than just nourishing our bodies. It is a chance to connect with our Creator and deepen our feelings of gratitude and appreciation. We should feel an inner joy when we realize that every form of physical pleasure provides us with an opportunity to uplift our spirits and bring holiness into our lives.

A blessing over food is not just about giving thanks for the physical pleasure we are about to enjoy. Each blessing should make us aware of a far greater gift: that even material pleasures can be a source of holiness!

In this way, the piece of fruit that we eat becomes קֹדֶשׁ הִלּוּלִים - "holy, for praising God."

(Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. II, p. 171)

Fw From Hamelaket@gmail.com

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Acharei - Kedoshim

תשפ"ג פרשת אחרי - קדושים

וידבר ד' אל משה אחרי מות שני בני אהרן בקרבתם לפני ד' וימתו

Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons, when they approached before Hashem, and they died. (16:1)

The text of this pasuk is redundant, since it mentions the deaths of Nadav and Avihu twice in the same pasuk. Daas Zekeinim m'Baalei Tosfos explain that the Torah mentions death twice, since they left no offspring to continue their legacy. For reasons of their own, they did not marry. Thus, it is considered as if they died twice: once when they left this world; and again because they left no one to carry on the memory of their lives and achievements. Horav Zev Weinberger, zl, cites the Talmud Moed Kattan (24a), "When they told Rabbi Yochanan that Rabbi Chaninah had passed away, he rent thirteen expensive wool garments on account of him. He said, 'The man of whom I was in fear is gone.'" (This part of the Talmud's questioning Shmuel's statement that kriyah, rending garments as a display of grief, is only explicable at the time of the most intense grief. Apparently, Rabbi Yochanan did not concur with Shmuel.) The Talmud replies that sages are different, since their teachings are mentioned all the time. Every time they are recalled, it evokes the time of most intense grief, as the loss of their death is once again renewed.

We derive from here that, when a Rebbe or a great sage leaves this world, his passing leaves a void vis-à-vis the Torah that he imparted to his many students. This idea is similar to the Sefas Emes's question concerning the Torah's enjoinment to mourn the deaths of Nadav and Avihu (Parashas Shemini; Vayikra 10:6), V'acheichem kol Bais Yisrael yivku es ha'sreifah asher saraf Hashem, "All the house of Yisrael shall bewail the conflagration that Hashem wrought." The word yivku, shall bewail, is written in the future tense when it should have been written in the present. Much has been posited concerning the idea that the death of a scholar, a Torah leader who inspired many, is different from the void left by one whose life and endeavor did not impact a wide range of people. Every day, every blatt Gemorah, every halachah, sets the stage for noticing the loss of a Rebbe. The void left by his passing is palpable. We feel orphaned, alone and adrift to confront the challenges of life without the captain who had been navigating our journey through the turbulent waters. Every epoch in time, every juncture, renews the grieving of their loss. The deaths of Nadav and Avihu left their mark, not only on the present, but also on generations to come.

When we consider the spiritual impact of the Holocaust in terms of the thousands of gedolei Yisrael that were murdered, this idea takes on a new reality. While, indeed, Torah study in America and Eretz Yisrael has reached impressive numbers, can we imagine what Jewish life would have been had Churban Europe not occurred? The yeshivos, the Roshei Yeshivah, the Rabbanim and the thousands of kehillos kedoshos that were slaughtered would have changed our lives and raised the banner of Torah exponentially. We can truly say that death came twice: their murder, and our continued loss.

Kedoshim

איש אמו ואביו תיראו

Every man: Your father and mother shall you revere/fear. (19:3)

Interestingly, in the Aseres HaDibros, Ten Commandments, the Torah commands Kabeid es avicha v'es imecha, "Honor your father and mother" (Shemos 20:12), without adding the word ish, every man. It is almost as if the Torah were intimating a special command to one who is an ish, that he must fear his parents. What is the difference between kavod, respect, and mora, fear? Horav Yosef Tzvi HaLevi Dunner, zl (Mikdash HaLevi), explains the disparity homiletically. The Torah is teaching us a valuable and vital lesson – one that I think is quite obvious in today's society. The Torah world, for the most part, has not fallen prey to this breakdown of moral obligation. As a secular psychologist put it: "Nowadays, 'Honor your father and mother' is just a suggestion."

The Rav explains that someone who has matured, reached adulthood and has taken his place in society must still show mora, fear for his parents. Many people acquiesce to kavod, respect, since it does not place any heavy burdens on the son/daughter. On the other hand, fear is something we too often relegate to youth. Young people must fear their parents. Adults who are successful in life must be respectful, but fearful? No. The Torah teaches us that, regardless of a person's status as an ish, he is still obligated to fulfill the mitzvah of mora.

Chazal (Pesikta Rabasi 23) characterize the mitzvah of Kibbud av v'eim as, "chamur she'b'chamuros," among the most difficult mitzvos to carry out properly. One must respect parents regardless of their suitability as parents. I have written numerous times that the Torah does not command us to love parents; rather, the Torah demands that we respect and fear them – under all circumstances.

The following story occurred concerning a man who was blessed with extraordinary longevity, whose mental cognition was in perfect working order past his one hundredth birthday. He was blessed with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren who showed him the greatest respect and waited on him hand and foot, making sure that he was never in need of anything. This was carried out with love, devotion, and the understanding that serving their Patriarch was a privilege.

This man was troubled by a question that kept gnawing at him. He asked his son, "I do not know why I was zocheh, merited, such longevity. Am I a greater tzaddik, more righteous, than my parents who did not live a long life? Am I more worthy than my many friends who have passed away? Why did Hashem choose me for such an unprecedented life? Perhaps I did something special. Or maybe, Hashem wants me to experience the infirmity, illness and pain that often accompany old age."

The son had no answer for his father's query. Indeed, it was an anomaly. Hashem has His reasons, which are all good. This, too, was good. It was the accepted response, but it did little to still his father's frustration. The son was a close talmid, student, of the Novominsker Rebbe, zl. When he heard that his revered Rebbe was planning a trip to Eretz Yisrael to (among other things) visit with Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zl, who was himself a centenarian, he asked that the Rebbe present his father's conundrum to the gadol ha'dor.

The Rebbe presented the man's question to Rav Shteinman, who immediately took hold of the Rebbe's lapels and declared, "I will give you the answer to this question. I insist that you relate this answer to him in the exact words that I use. You know that we are presently in the waning period of galus Edom, the exile personified by Eisav ha'Rasha. (This is not the forum to describe Eisav's psyche and behavior and how his minions continue until this very day to adhere to the contemptuous character traits which he personified.) The merit that Eisav accrued, which has served him throughout the generations and continues to support him, is the z'chus of his kibbud av. Eisav showed extraordinary honor to Yitzchak Avinu, in many ways setting

the standard for this mitzvah. While his intentions were far from noble, on the surface his actions were exemplary. Now Hashem seeks to free us from the shackles of Eisav's galus. Thus, he gave us the mitzvah of kibbud av v'eim, with the hope that we will perform this mitzvah with zeal and devotion. This is why, as we inch closer to the end of our galus, the Almighty extends the longevity of our aged, so that their children will be able to honor them longer and better."

The Novominsker was moved by this explanation. He added that many parents do not want to be a burden to their children. Every time they are compelled to call for a favor, they mull it over five times before they make the call. According to the aforementioned, this "burden" is actually Hashem's way of providing children with the opportunity to honor their parents, thus catalyzing an end to our galus.

לא תלין פעלת שכיר אתך עד בקר ... לא תקלל חרש

You shall not withhold a worker's wage with you until morning… You shall not curse the deaf. (19:13,14)

The deaf person will not hear your curses. Nonetheless, one does not curse his fellow. Certainly, if he can hear and is aware of the curse, such deplorable behavior is an anathema for a Jew. The Baal HaTurim expounds on the juxtaposition of withholding wages upon cursing the deaf. Even if one has a valid complaint, i.e. he worked hard through sweat and toil, and he put in a full day's work. He now wants/needs to get paid. He has no food at home. His children are starving. His earnings were to be used to purchase the vital necessities to sustain his family. His boss says, "No, I do not have the money now. I will pay you when I can." "But I need it now. I have fulfilled my part. I worked. Now you must keep your word." "Sorry", is all his boss replied. The worker is hurt, humiliated and angry. Is it any wonder that he wants to curse his boss, to deliver every imprecation he can think of? It will not garner a paycheck for him, but it will assuage some of the hurt. The Torah teaches us that Jews do not curse, even when they think they are justified. Take the boss to a din Torah, present your complaints before a court, but do not curse him.

Furthermore, one who believes in and trusts Hashem will "leave" the problem for Hashem to address. When he loses it, spews vitriol and curses, he indicates by his actions that he has given up hope of seeing a timely resolution to his problem. Who is not plagued with a situation that drives him batty because he can do nothing but wait, compelled to remain silent while individuals whose intentions are far from holy make his life miserable? Cursing may be a release from his tension, but it is ineffective and dangerous. We have boundaries in life. Cursing a fellow Jew – regardless of his ignominious behavior – is crossing the boundary.

Anyone who has ever been involved in klal work, helping the community or in a position of leadership will, at times, make decisions which are not consistent with the needs of every individual. As a result, people vent out their anger on the activist or leader, to the point that he says, "What do I need this for? It is one thing not to receive a thank you, but to be reviled and even cursed is much more than I bargained for." The response to him is: It is inevitable that one who is doing something, acting on behalf of the community, will have someone who will take umbrage and express negativity against him. At least he is acting on behalf of others, and it is inescapable for one to make a cake without breaking eggs. It all goes with the territory.

The Steipler Gaon, zl (cited by Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita), writes (Kraina d'Igarta), "One should know that whoever takes upon himself the mantle of oseik b'tzarcehi tzibbur, involving himself in the needs of the community, is not spared agmas nefesh, suffering of the spirit, mental anguish and torment. In the merit of the yissurim, troubles and pain that he experiences, however, he will be entitled to great achievement and success." In order to achieve something, some sacrifices are inevitable. One of those sacrifices is that one should expect to become the punching bag for someone who either does not agree with him or who feels that he is getting the short end of the stick. Usually, this is a person whose jaundiced outlook on life taints his ability to enjoy anything positive. It is best to ignore him and plow ahead.

If one were to consider a time in Jewish American history when its rabbinic leadership was at its extreme lowest point, I would suggest the appointment of Horav Yaakov Yosef/Joseph, zl, as Chief Rabbi of New York. With the reputation as the Maggid of Vilna and its Dayan, he came with impressive, impeccable credentials. A multi-talented individual, he was a brilliant scholar, prolific speaker and, above all, a man of sterling character. He became the victim of rabid secular Jewish animus toward anything that smacked of religion and the insecurity of a number of Orthodox groups who insisted on a rabbi that was of Chassidic or Galician/Hungarian extraction, and not a Litvak, of Lithuanian background. Veritably, these groups were scared of their own shadow and feared change to the status quo.

The oldest and most prominent Polish-Russian shul was the Bais Hamedrash HaGadol on the Lower East Side. It was comprised of roughly thirty smaller shuls. This was to be the nexus of operations for the new Chief Rabbi. Rav Joseph immediately focused on what were the two most egregious transgressions that were choking the Orthodox community: The observance of Shabbos and kashrus. If a stop would not be put to the flagrant violations of the Torah's code of law, the term Orthodox would become extinct – swallowed by the powerful entrenched Reform community. He was forced to contend with the unscrupulous union of the shochtim who viewed him as a threat to their control of kashrus (which, in those times, was a pejorative term) of both meat and poultry. He fought valiantly, despite threats to his life and welfare, but it was a losing battle. He was opposed by corrupt and greedy businessmen and unprincipled, ruthless butchers. He did achieve some notable accomplishments as he attempted to bring structure to Jewish religious life. The greatest obstacles to his success were sadly from his own (supposedly) frum constituents who were opposed to him. He was cursed, slandered, reviled and hounded. During all of his tribulations, he maintained his dignity. He refused to allow his supporters to stoop to the level of his detractors by responding in kind.

At the end, Rav Josef's paltry salary, which the shochtim paid, was discontinued, and the shul could not pick up the shortfall. Shortly after this latest indignity, he suffered a debilitating stroke which incapacitated him for the last years of his life. His funeral was one of the largest in New York, the irony of which was that he was accorded greater honor in death than in life.

One wonders about the punishment meted out to the rabble rousers and their rabbinic and lay supporters. I think they were punished middah k'neged middah, measure for measure. By their very actions, they undermined the opportunity for Torah growth in America. Every vestige of respect for Torah and its disseminators was crippled by their actions. The Torah was debased, and Hashem's Name was desecrated. This was wrought by men who had sold themselves to the holy dollar and rabbinic fellows whose fear of sharing their respect with a rav much more qualified than they scared them to the point that they acted as barbarians and murderers, demonstrating no respect for Torah and human dignity.

Their punishment? Their children left the fold. Sadly, children of distinguished leaders eschewed their religion, assimilated and married out of the faith. When fathers denigrate Torah and its leaders, their sons learn to complete their father's work – which they did. Even the fine, upstanding rabbanim who sided with the shochtim and criticized Rav Joseph, thus diminishing his authority, saw their children become their greatest source of pain and humiliation. Despite their frumkeit, they erred in taking matters into their own hands, rather than letting Hashem decide the course of events. When one curses others, he loses his opportunity for blessing.

לזכר נשמת - חיים ישששכר בן יחיאל זאדל דוב ז"ל - נפטר י"ג אייר
Feigenbaum, Richman and Finkelstein Families

prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

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PARSHAT KEDOSHIM -shiur #1

PARSHAT KEDOSHIM & THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

It's not very difficult to find the Ten Commandments 'hiding' in Parshat Kedoshim, at least most of them. [See Ramban, Ibn Ezra, and Chizkuni on 19:2.]

In the following shiur, we study the nature of this parallel (and its 'missing links') in an attempt to uncover its deeper meaning.

INTRODUCTION

In the first four psukim of Parshat Kedoshim, the parallels to some of the 'dibrot' [the Ten Commandments] are rather obvious [e.g. honoring one's parents, keeping Shabbat, idol worship etc.]. However, as the Parsha continues, the parallels become less obvious, and as we will see, some of the parallels to the dibrot become rather 'stretched' and others appear to be missing!

Nonetheless, it would be logical to assume that there must be a deeper reason for these parallels, and the manner of their presentation.

We begin our shiur by taking note of an interesting internal pattern within Parshat Kedoshim, that may help us 'crack the code'.

THE ANI HASHEM DELIMITERS

As you review the first 18 psukim of Parshat Kedoshim, note how the 'refrain' ANI HASHEM is repeated EIGHT TIMES (at the end of just about every other pasuk). Note as well how this refrain appears in two different forms:

ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM - the first four (see 19:1-10);
ANI HASHEM - the next four times (see 19:11-18).

This pattern suggests that these mitzvot divide into TWO groups. The distinction between them is also rather obvious:

- The ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM group contains primarily mitzvot 'bein adam la-Makom' (between man & God) and hence is parallel to the first five DIBROT;
- The ANI HASHEM group contains primarily mitzvot which are 'bein adam le-chaveiro' (between man and his fellow man), and hence is parallel to the last five DIBROT.

To verify this, note how the ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM group contains obvious parallels to four of the five first DIBROT:

- I. ANOCHI (see 19:2);
- II. LO YIHIYEH (see 19:4);
- III. LO TISA - [no apparent parallel]
- IV. SHABBAT (see 19:3); &
- V. KIBBUD AV (see 19:3).

Note, however, that we have two problems. First of all, we did not find any obvious parallel for the third Commandment. But we also did not find any parallel for the laws discussed in 19:5-10 [i.e. the laws of 'pigul' and 'pe'a' etc.]. Before we return to this question, let's take a look at the second group:

In the ANI HASHEM group (see 19:12,14,16,18) we find a variety of mitzvot bein adam le-chaveiro, the most obvious parallels to the last five DIBROT being:

- VI. LO TIRTZACH - 'lo ta'amod al dam re'echa' (19:15)
- VII. LO TIN'AF - the laws of 'shifcha charufa' (19:20-22)
- VIII. LO TIGNOV - 'lo tignovu...' (see 19:11)
- IX. LO TA'ANEH be-re'acha ED SHAKER - 'lo tishav'u bi-shmi la-SHAKER..." (see 19:12).
- X. LO TACHMOD - 'lo ta'ashok et re'acha ...' (19:18).

Even though some of these parallels are a bit stronger than others, all of the mitzvot in this section can definitely be categorized according to one of the last five DIBROT.

Let's return now to our question, i.e. we are missing a parallel for the third DIBBUR - LO TISA ET SHEM HASHEM ELOKEICHA LA-SHAV - in the ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM group.

Bothered by this question, Chizkuni (based on Vayikra Rabba 24:5) suggests that LO TISA is parallel to 'lo tishav'u bi-shmi la-shaker' (see 19:12). However, that parallel would 'violate' the pattern that we discerned above, for the parallel should be found within the ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM group, i.e. in the first ten psukim.

Furthermore, based on the context of 19:12 - Lo tishav'u bi-shmi la-SHAKER - and noting the use of the word 'shaker' - its parallel to 'lo taaneh be-re'acha ed SHAKER' (Commandment #9) appears to be much more convincing. [This also keeps it in the ANI HASHEM group.]

THE MISSING 'LINK'

Let's return to the pattern set by the phrase "ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM". Using the 'process of elimination', the parallel to the third Commandment [LO TISA] must be located somewhere within the mitzvot discussed between 19:5 and 19:10. However, these psukim simply discuss primarily the laws of 'pigul', a law that contains no obvious parallel to 'not stating God's Name in vain'.

On the other hand, the pattern that we have seen thus far 'begs' us to look for a connection; so let's give it a try. To do so, we must first explain the law of pigul.

The korban SHLAMIM is a voluntary offering that can be eaten by the owner; however, its meat must be consumed on that same day or the next (see Vayikra 7:16-18). Parshat Kedoshim presents this law once again (see 19:5-8), adding the information that the punishment for eating the meat outside of this time frame is 'karet' - being 'cut-off' from the people of Israel (see 19:8!) - one of the most stringent of Biblical punishments.

Interestingly, Chazal [our Sages] interpret this prohibition in an even more stringent manner. They claim that the primary prohibition is not necessarily eating the korban on the third day, but rather simply THINKING about eating the KORBAN outside of its time frame! In other words, if at the time of offering this sacrifice, one merely thinks about eating its meat outside of its time frame - the offering is rendered PIGUL - and he who does so will be punished with KARET! [Even if the meat is never eaten at the wrong time.]

This strange law raises two questions. First of all, why would someone think of doing so in the first place? Secondly, let's say he does, why is the punishment for simply 'thinking about it' so severe? And finally, what is so terrible if one eats from this korban for an extra day? Is it really better that he should let the meat 'go to waste'?

'THINKING' IS WORSE THAN EATING!

To understand the logic behind the law of PIGUL, we must consider that is quite impossible for a single person to consume the meat of an entire animal in a day or two. Therefore, practically speaking, the Torah's prohibition against eating the meat of a shlamim outside its time frame forces the individual to SHARE the meat of this korban with others!

[Recall as well that the korban must also be consumed within the walls of Yerushalayim. Therefore, the option of bringing the korban 'home' to share with his family is also precluded.]

Let's say that are assumption is correct that the owner of the KORBAN has no choice other than to share his korban SHLAMIM with other visitors in Yerushalayim. Consequently, we now have a logical reason for one to think of when he will eat this KORBAN at the time of its offering. The very THOUGHT of eating a korban outside its time frame implies that the owner does not want to SHARE his korban with others. In other words, this person offering the korban is being selfish, for he wants to save the meat

for himself.

Clearly, being selfish is a bad trait. But is it so evil that it deserves the punishment of KARET - to be totally cut off from the people of Israel?

A NECESSARY BALANCE

This law of PIGUL may contain an extremely important 'mussar' (moral message) concerning the necessary balance between our relationship with God and our fellow man.

Recall that the Korban SHLAMIM is a voluntary offering where one wishes to express his closeness to God, to re-affirm his commitment to the covenant of HAR SINAI (see TSC shiur on Parshat Vayikra). If at the height of one's spiritual experience, as he stands in front of God offering his KORBAN SHLAMIM, a selfish thought can still enter his mind - i.e. he does not want to share his korban with others - God becomes 'disgusted' with this person, and the korban becomes PIGUL. A person who has yet to inculcate the basic trait of sharing, has no right to stand in front of the MIZBEIACH and offer a voluntary korban to God!

To support this understanding, note how the next pasuk in Parshat Kedoshim contains a law that stems from a similar reason. The obligation of the farmer to leave over a part of his field for the poor ['pe'a', 'shichecha', and 'leket' / see 19:9-10] teaches the owner not to be so selfish as to keep all of its produce for himself. Here we find yet another mitzva that requires the sharing of prosperity, and thus supports our interpretation of the underlying reason for the law of pigul.

PIGUL & LO TISA

If 'sharing' is indeed the underlying reason for PIGUL and PE'A, then the parallel between Parshat Kedoshim and the Ten Commandments, as discussed above, would suggest that these laws should be in some manner related to the third Commandment of LO TISA - not to proclaim God's Name in vain. To uncover that connection, we must return to our study of the meaning of God's Name in Sefer Breishit, and its connection to the laws of the MIZBEIACH and hence to korbanot in general.

SHEM HASHEM & THE MIZBEIACH

Recall from Parshat Lech Lecha how Avraham Avinu, immediately upon his arrival in Eretz Canaan, built a MIZBEIACH and 'calls out in God's Name' in BET EL [lit. the HOUSE of God] (see Breishit 12:8 & 13:4). As we explained in our shiur on this topic, Avraham's MIZBEIACH served as a vehicle enabling him to 'call out in God's Name', or as Ramban on 12:8 explained, teaching mankind concerning their need to recognize God and His Creation.

Later at Har Sinai we find a similar connection between the mizbeiach and 'shem Hashem' [God's Name]. Immediately upon the completion of the Ten Commandments, God commands Bnei Yisrael:

> "An earthen MIZBEIACH you shall make for Me... where ever I CALL OUT MY NAME I will come and bless you" (Shmot 20:21).
>
> [Note that the psukim in Shmot 20:19-23 can also be understood as parallel to the first three DIBROT, while the remaining DIBROT are parallel to the mitzvot which continue in Parshat Mishpatim (very similar to what happens in Parshat Kedoshim). According to that parallel, the law of MIZBEIACH is clearly the parallel to LO TISA! (Read 20:22-23 carefully to verify this.)]

As the above examples show, the concept of 'shem Hashem' relates directly to the MIZBEIACH. In fact, the bet ha-mikdash itself is consistently referred to in Sefer Devarim as 'ha-Makom asher yivchar Hashem leshaken SHMO sham' - the place that God will choose to allow His Name to dwell (see for example Devarim 12:5-12, 16:1-17, and 26:1-2).

As the very purpose of the bet ha-mikdash and the mizbeiach is to properly publicize the Name of God, any law relating to the proper offering of a sacrifice could be considered as parallel to LO TISA, especially the laws of pigul.

If so, then our parallel between the DIBROT and opening psukim Parshat Kedoshim is complete, as pigul becomes the parallel for Lo Tisa in the 'Ani Hashem Elokeichem' section!

This parallel also follows the differentiation between the mitzvot bein adam la-Makom (first five) and the mitzvot bein adam le-chaveiro (last five). It should not surprise us now to find that the Torah's presentation of the of law of PIGUL includes the phrase -'et kodesh HASHEM chillel' - for he has desecrated that what is holy to God (see 19:8).

As the primary concept of the Third Commandment is not to desecrate God's Name, then its parallel could include any law that may cause God's Name (or reputation) to become tainted. An individual who comes to the bet ha-mikdash to express his special closeness to God - by offering a korban shlamim, yet at the same time thinks selfishly about himself, causes God's Name to be desecrated.

SHNEI LUCHOT HA-BRIT

One could suggest that this may be the underlying message of the two sections of the Ten Commandments, [i.e the two LUCHOT of BRIT SINAI]. The mitzvot bein adam la-Makom' of the first five DIBROT come 'part and parcel' with the mitzvot bein adam le-chaveiro of the last five DIBROT.

In fact, the law of pigul forms a meaningful transition between these two sections, for it is a law relating to both man & God, and his fellow man. This necessary blend between one's worship of God and his respect and care for his fellow man, so typical of the other laws of Parshat Kedoshim, should be the most prominent character of the Jewish nation.

When Am Yisrael act in this manner, they become a true AM KADOSH, a holy nation that truly testifies that God is KADOSH and His Name is KADOSH. By doing so, they facilitate bringing 'shem Hashem' God's Name (and hence His reputation) to mankind.

shabbat shalom,
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. Can you suggest a reason why ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM relates to the mitzvot bein adam la-Makom while ANI HASHEM relates to the mitzvot bein adam le-chaveiro (at least in the first 18 psukim)? [Hint: Which mitzvot are more universal, and which are more special for Am Yisrael?]

B. In Parshat Kedoshim, we find a pattern where there appears to be no or very little connection from one mitzva to the next. Do you think that this is intentional?

If so, based on the above shiur, what is its significance?

See Ibn Ezra in 19:3-18. Do you agree with all of his associations co ncerning the flow of the parsha?]

PARSHAT KEDOSHIM -shiur #2

THE HEADER / KOL ADAT YISRAEL

Does the name 'EDAH' imply something 'good' or something 'bad'? Even though EDAH carries a negative connotation in the story of the spies in Parshat Shlach, in the opening pasuk of Parshat Kedoshim it seems to imply something very positive.

In the following shiur we suggest a thematic connection between the word EDAH and the first half of Parshat Kedoshim (i.e. chapter 19).

INTRODUCTION

In contrast to most parshiot in Chumash which begin with the standard header:

"And God spoke to Moshe saying, speak to BNEI YISRAEL..."

Parshat Kedoshim adds a short but important phrase:

> "And God spoke to Moshe saying, speak to KOL ADAT Bnei Yisrael... - to the entire congregation of Israel" (19:1-2).

This special header indicates that there must be some specific

reason why this parshia was given to KOL ADAT YISRAEL -i.e. to the entire EDAH - congregation of Israel. [Note that ADAT is simply the 'smichut' form of EDAH.]

Rashi, quoting the Midrash in Torat Kohanim, explains that specifically this parshia was given to the 'entire congregation' because it includes most of the basic principles of the Torah ['rov gufei Torah tluyin bah']. [See also Chizkuni (19:2) who quotes a similar Midrash Tanchuma.]

Even though Rashi explains why it was necessary for Moshe to relay these mitzvot in a special gathering, he does not explain why specifically the word EDAH is used! In other words, the Torah could have simply said: speak to KOL Bnei Yisrael (ALL of Bnei Yisrael / see Devarim 1:1), or could have used the Hebrew word KAHAL instead of EDAH, which would have been a more precise way to describe a gathering.

Therefore, the Torah's choice of the word EDAH suggests a connection between the mitzvot of Parshat Kedoshim and the word EDAH. To find that connection, we must consider its etymology.

The Hebrew word EDAH stems from one of two possible roots:

1) ayin.daled - which implies to AFFIRM or TESTIFY
   [e.g. the word EID= a witness; EDAH= a female witness]
2) yod.ayin.daled - which implies to APPOINT or to DESIGNATE

The first root would imply that Am Yisrael, when called an EDAH, serve as sort of a WITNESS, while the second root would imply that they have been APPOINTED for a certain purpose. How would either or both explanations tie into Parshat Kedoshim?

From the opening commandment of Parshat Kedoshim, one could suggest an interesting interpretation:

> "KEDOSHIM TIHIYU - You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy..." (19:2).

By acting as a holy nation, Am Yisrael 'testifies' (to itself and to other nations) that God exists, for He is holy. [See Sforno 19:2.]

Why is this testimony necessary?

Testimony is usually needed order to prove a fact. Considering that God is transcendent, it is difficult for man to perceive His existence. Therefore, God commands ADAT BNEI YISRAEL to keep special mitzvot which help create a society which 'testifies' to God's existence. One could actually combine both meanings and suggest that it is for this reason that God DESIGNATED Bnei Yisrael to become a nation.

KEDUSHA - FOR A PURPOSE

Even though this interpretation may not be 'simple pshat', it blends nicely with Sefer Vayikra's theme of KEDUSHA in the three realms of MAKOM, ZMAN, & ADAM, which we developed in our shiur on Acharei Mot.

a) KEDUSHAT HA-MISHKAN ['kedushat makom'], we explained, implies that God separates a special place and infuse it with an intense level of holiness IN ORDER that it affect and thus elevate the level of the area which surrounds it.

b) In a similar manner, God separated SHABBAT ['kedushat zman'], infusing it with a intense level of holiness, IN ORDER to elevate the spiritual level of the entire week.

c) So too - KEDUSHAT AM YISRAEL ['kedushat adam']. God separates a special nation, infusing it with an intense level of holiness, IN ORDER to elevate the spiritual level of all nations. God 'designates' Am Yisrael to follow the mitzvot of KEDOSHIM TIHIYU to fulfill this purpose, and in this manner we 'testify' before all nations that God exists.

This concept, which may only be alluded to here in Parshat Kedoshim, is stated more directly in Sefer Devarim as Bnei Yisrael prepare to enter the Promised Land:

> "See, I have taught you CHUKIM & MISHPATIM [compare Vayikra 18:3-5!] for you to keep in the land which you are about to conquer. Observe them faithfully, for that will be PROOF of you wisdom IN THE EYES OF THE NATIONS who upon hearing all these laws will say:
> Surely, that great nation is a wise people, for what great nation is there that is so CLOSE TO GOD... or what great nation has such perfect CHUKIM & MISHPATIM as the TORAH that I set before you on this day..." (Devarim 4:5-8).

TWO OTHER PARSHIOT

In addition to Parshat Kedoshim, there are two earlier parshiot of mitzvot which are directed specifically to ADAT BNEI YISRAEL.

1) Parshat Ha-Chodesh - Shmot 12:1-20 (see 12:3) which discusses MAKKAT BECHOROT & KORBAN PESACH.
2) Parshat Vayakhel - the commandment to build the MISHKAN.

One could explain the Torah's use of the phrase ADAT BNEI YISRAEL in these two parshiot in a similar manner.

(1) Parshat Ha-Chodesh (as we all know) is God's very FIRST commandment to Bnei Yisrael (see Rashi Breishit 1:1). The laws of Korban Pesach that are detailed in that parshia serve a double purpose. For Am Yisrael to:

a) recognize God's hand in their salvation from MAKKAT BECHOROT [which caused the Egyptians to finally recognize God. [See Shmot 11:1-10.]

b) AFFIRM their covenantal commitment to BRIT BEIN H-'BTARIM (i.e. Brit Avot). [See shiur on Parshat Va'era].

(2) Parshat Vayakhel describes the commandment to build the MISHKAN which itself serves as a symbol and testimony of God's presence. [Recall that at the focal point of the Mishkan lie the LUCHOT ha-EIDUT / see Shmot 25:16,21-22.]

One could even suggest that these three parshiot which are given to ADAT Bnei Yisrael reflect once again the three realms of KEDUSHA:

Parshat ha-Chodesh - kedushat ZMAN
Parshat Vayakhel - kedushat MAKOM
Parshat Kedoshim - kedushat ADAM

FOR FURTHER IYUN

1. Note in the first Rashi on "daber el kol ADAT Bnei Yisrael" that Rashi states: "melamed she-ne'emar be-HAKHEL". How does the parallel to Shmot 35:1 help us better understand this Rashi?
2. In Sefer Bamidbar (see 14:26-27 and its context), Bnei Yisrael sin at chet ha-meraglim. Those sinners are referred to as an EDAH RA'A - a wicked (or bad) EDAH?

   Can our explanation of 'witness' still apply in this case?
3. Note that Korach's splinter group is also called an EDAH, and in Korach's original complaint we find the same word - "ki KOL ha-EDAH kulam KDOSHIM u-vetocham HASHEM..." (see Bamidbar 16:3). Can you relate this complaint of Korach to this week's shiur and the Torah's use of the word EDAH?

PARSHAT KEDOSHIM - shiur #3

The Repetition of the "ARAYOT"

[revised 5767]

If you ever paid attention to the final psukim in Parshat Kedoshim, you must have been terribly bothered by the last pasuk of the Parsha. As anyone will immediately notice, it simply doesn't belong there!

Furthermore, did you ever notice that Vayikra chapter 20 (the last chapter of Parshat Kedoshim) is almost a repeat of chapter 18 (the last chapter of Parshat Acharei Mot)?

In the following shiur we attempt to tackle these questions by uncovering the special internal format of chapter 20 (better know as a chiastic structure).

[Our conclusion will also help us better appreciate why Parshat Kedoshim is located in the middle of Sefer Vayikra.]

INTRODUCTION

Take a minute to review the final few psukim of Parshat Kedoshim (at least 20:23-27). While doing so, note how the second to last pasuk of Parshat Kedoshim could have formed a beautiful conclusion for the entire sedra:

> "And you shall be holy [kedoshim] to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and I have set you apart from other nations to be Mine" (20:26).

However, instead of ending on that profound note, the Torah 'adds on' an extra pasuk that appears to be just 'dangling on' to this otherwise perfect ending:

"And any man or woman who has an OV or a YID'ONI shall be put to death, they shall be pelted with stones..." (20:27).

[Once again, review the 20:20-27 to verify this.]

Furthermore, over half of the specific laws and general statements found in chapter 20 were already mentioned in chapter 18!

We begin our shiur by undertaking a study of the nature of this repetition. Our conclusions will assist us in our study of the internal structure of chapter 20.

A REPEAT OF THE 'ARAYOT'

Take a few minutes to compare chapter 20 with chapter 18 (especially 18:6-23 with 20:10-21; 18:1-5 with 20:8; and 18:24-30 with 20:22-25).

You'll find that almost every mitzva that was mentioned in chapter 18 (especially the 'arayot' - the forbidden marital relationships) is repeated in chapter 20; and most of the general commandments 20:22-24 are repeats of 18:26-28!

However, if you take a closer look, you'll notice how the manner of presentation of these mitzvot in each chapter is quite different. The basic differences are as follows:

In chapter 20 we find a SPECIFIC punishment for each transgression. In contrast, chapter 18 simply states that these ARAYOT are forbidden [note the repetition of phrase 'lo tegaleh ervatan'], without informing us what specific punishment the Jewish court [bet din] should exact upon them. The punishment is only mentioned in passing at the conclusion of chapter 18, where we are told that God will 'cut off from His nation' anyone who transgresses (what we call 'karet' / see 18:29).

For this reason, the order [of the arayot] in each perek is different. In chapter 18, they follow (more or less) the order of family closeness, daughter, etc.), while the order in chapter 20 follows the severity of the punishment.

Furthermore, in chapter 20 we find the concept of KEDUSHA, while in chapter 18 we find only the concept of TUM'A.

Finally, chapter 20 includes some additional laws such as OV & YID'ONI. [Note 20:6 & 20:27.]

We'll return to this analysis shortly; however, before we continue we must first take into consideration the internal structure of chapter 20, which happens to be rather intriguing.

A CHIASTIC STRUCTURE

Within chapter 20 [note that chapter 20 constitutes an independent 'parshia'], we find a chiastic structure [ABCDCBA] that beautifully explains why the last pasuk only appears to be 'out of place'. To illustrate this special structure, the following chart shows how the opening set of psukim are 'balanced' by a concluding set of psukim that deal with parallel topics.

While studying the chart (and the psukim!), note how the laws concerning the arayot in 20:9-21 are 'enveloped' by several sets of matching mitzvot:

VAYIKRA CHAPTER 20

==========

A - Punishment for MOLECH and OV & YID'ONI (20:1-6)
| B - "ve-HITKADISHTEM vi-heyitem kedoshim..." (20:7)
| | C - Keep My CHUKIM...[intro to arayot] (20:8)
| | | D - The specific cases of the arayot (20:9-21)
| | C - Keep all My CHUKIM... [or else..." (20:22-23)
| B - ".. vi-heyitem li KEDOSHIM, ki KADOSH ani..." (20:24-26)
A - Punishment for transgression of OV & YID'ONI (20:27)

Let's see now what we can learn from this structure.

First we will explain why (and how) each set of psukim is linked (i.e. A to A, B to B, etc.

Afterward, we will explain how this structure relates to chapter 18 and the theme of Sefer Vayikra.

A->A / THE 'MISSING' DETAIL

First of all, by setting up the psukim in this manner, we immediately see how the last pasuk of chapter 20 (i.e. 20:27) forms the 'bookend' for 20:1-6! In fact, 20:26 is more than just a 'matching bookend'; it actually contains an important law that is missing in 20:1-6. Let's explain:

In 20:1-6 we find:

a) the punishment by BET DIN for MOLECH
   i.e. death by stoning (see 20:2)
b) the punishment by God for MOLECH
   "ve-samti PANAI ba-ish ha-hu..." (see 20:4-5).

Then, we find:

c) the punishment by God for OV & YID'ONI
   "ve-natati PANAI ba-nefesh ha-hi..." (see 20:6)

But, we are missing:

-> the punishment by BET DIN for OV & YID'ONI!

In other words, even though 20:1-6 explains BOTH the punishment by BET-DIN & by God for MOLECH, for OV & YID'ONI we find only the punishment by God, while the punishment by Bet Din is missing. Therefore, 20:26 - which informs us that the punishment by BET DIN for OV & YID'ONI is death by stoning - complements the laws in 20:1-6.

[In the further iyun section, we will explain why specifically this law was taken from the 'header' and placed in the 'footer' of this unit; but in the meantime it is important that we recognize that these psukim form the 'bookends' of the entire parshia.

B->B / BACK TO PARSHAT SHMINI

The obvious textual parallel is the almost identical pasuk of "ve-hitkadishtem vi-heyitem kedoshim..." (see 20:7 & 20:26). In addition, the concluding psukim of Parshat Shmini (see 11:44-47) provide us with an even stronger connection between 20:7 to 20:24. [To keep the shiur more concise, you'll need to find that parallel on your own.]

C->C / A FAMILIAR 'ENVELOPE' FOR [D]

Here we find a matching set of psukim that should not surprise us, for they repeat the same pattern that was already found in chapter 18. Let's explain:

Recall from last week's shiur how chapter 18 began with a 'header' (see 18:1-5) forming a very general introduction, and concluded with a similar 'footer' (see 18:26-30). This general header and footer 'enveloped' the more specific list of arayot (see 18:6-25)! As you may have noticed, the list of arayot in chapter 20 (i.e. 20:9-21) is 'surrounded' by a very similar 'header' and 'footer' of 'u-shmarten et chukotai...' (see 20:8 and 20:22). Note as well how both 'footers' in chapter 18 and in chapter 20 include a warning that the land will kick out those who transgress these laws.

Using the above chart, we would simply say that the partial format of [C-D-C] in chapter 20 parallels the entire format of chapter 18.

FROM TECHNICAL TO THEMATIC

Up until this point, our discussion has been very technical, simply showing how the Torah presents the laws of chapter 20 in chiastic form; and in a manner parallel to chapter 18. Now we must attempt to uncover the thematic significance of this presentation. To do so we must consider the progression of the parshiot in Sefer Vayikra and their connection to the themes in Chumash that we have discussed in our study of Sefer Shmot.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

As we have already noted, most of the laws in chapters 20 were already mentioned in chapter 18. Therefore, to understand why the Torah repeats these laws, we must consider the two primary details which chapter 20 adds (as we noted in our above

introduction):

1) Punishment (usually the death penalty / 'mot yumat...') for each transgression.
2) The concept of KEDUSHA.

Even though chapter 18 teaches us that all of the arayot are forbidden, it does not detail the precise penalty for each transgression. It simply informs us that these acts 'defile' the land [= TUM'A / see 18:24-25], and that God will 'cut off' those who transgress [= KARET / see 18:29].

Now in chapter 20, the Torah informs us that the people are responsible to punish those who transgress (see 20:2,9,10 etc.). In other words, chapter 20 empowers bet din (the Jewish Court) to enforce these laws. In fact, enacting the death penalty (by stoning) is both the first and last topic of the perek, while each pasuk from 20:9-21 (detailing each of the arayot) concludes with a form of punishment by bet din.

Note also how the Torah introduces these punishments for the "arayot" (before they are detailed) with the statement: 've-hitkadishtem...' -and you should make yourselves HOLY (see 20:7) - and closes them in a similar manner (see 20:26 / B->B above). However, in chapter 18, we find no mention at all of KEDUSHA; only TUM'A!

This contrasting parallel suggests that the Torah considers the act of setting up a judicial system to enforce God's special laws as a form of KEDUSHA!

Why is specifically this considered kedusha? Furthermore, why doesn't the Torah simply combine the laws in chapters 18 & 20 together? What do we gain by first learning that these acts are forbidden, and then only later find out that bet din is empowered to punish he who transgresses?

To answer these questions, we must consider the progression of parshiot from chapter 18 to 20.

A THEMATIC PROGRESSION

Recall (from the shiur on Acharei Mot) how Sefer Vayikra divides into two distinct sections:

1) Chapters 1-17 - laws relating to the mikdash.
2) Chapter 18-26 - laws concerning the nation & kedusha.

Recall as well how chapter 18 (with its introductory psukim emphasizing ANI HASHEM) forms the introduction to the second half of Sefer Vayikra. Let's take note of the progression of parshiot in the first part of this section:

Chapter 18:

* Reject Egyptian & Canaanite culture i.e. how not to act
* Follow My laws instead, i.e. how you should act
* Specific examples of how not to act –
  i.e. the prohibition of the "arayot"
  [which are primarily 'mitzvot bein adam la-Makom'].
* How GOD will punish those who transgress (and that nation).

Chapter 19:

KEDOSHIM TIHEYU - Be holy!
i.e. examples of how Am Yisrael should act!
[Primarily 'mitzvot bein adam le-chaveiro'.]
As we explained in last week's shiur - taking the principles of the Ten Commandments, and raising them to a higher level in a manner which affects every aspect of daily living.

No mention of punishment by bet din.
[Instead, the repetition of ANI HASHEM (in both chapters) for He will punish those who transgress and reward he who follows. See Rashi 18:2!]

Chapter 20:

Punishment by BET-DIN for those who transgress the mitzvot (recorded in chapter 18). / as explained above.

Let's consider what we may infer from this progression. First, God tells Am Yisrael how they should NOT act, then how they SHOULD act, and that they must follow these rules - simply because He says so - summarized by the statement: ANI HASHEM!

In other words, we must follow these laws - not in fear of their punishment (by society), but only out of the love (or fear) of God.

Only afterward, in chapter 20, God commands Am Yisrael to enforce these laws, in order to ensure that they become a 'mamlechet kohanim ve-goy KADOSH'! Hence, the nation itself must set up a judicial system to enforce them.

BACK TO A-A

As our thematic analysis has shown, chapter twenty focuses on the responsibility of Bet Din to enforce the laws (originally detailed in chapter 18) by punishing those who transgress. Just as the middle section of this chiastic structure highlights this responsibility, the opening and closing sections in the chiasmus of chapter 20 emphasize this very same point.

Recall how chapter 20 begins specifically with the responsibility of Bet Din to punish a person who worships Molech, and concludes with Bet Din's responsibility to punish a person who practices the cult of OV & YIDONI. Even though it who have appeared to more logical for both of these laws to appear in the middle section, - to highlight the theme of punishment by Bet Din in chapter 20, Chumash places one law as the 'opener' and the other as the closing pasuk.

THE SAME THREE STAGES IN SEFER SHMOT

In a certain manner, the progression from chapter 18 through chapter 19 till chapter 20 is quite similar to the sequence of events in Sefer Shmot. Let's explain:

Recall that as the process of Yetziat Mitzrayim began, God's first commandment to Bnei Yisrael (when they were still in Egypt) was that they recognize ANI HASHEM (see Shmot 6:4-8), and hence to rid themselves of Egyptian culture. In our shiur on Parshat Va'era we proved this from Yechezkel 20:5-11. [Note the parallels between that perek in Yechezkel and Vayikra chapter 18, i.e. the phrase ANI HASHEM and the commandment to rid themselves from Egyptian culture. (Compare 18:1-5 to Yech. 20:5-10.)]

Recall as well that at MARA (after Bnei Yisrael left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea) God repeats this commandment, to prepare them for Matan Torah at Har Sinai. [See Shmot 16:26-27.]

Hence, those events would parallel Vayikra chapter 18.

Then Bnei Yisrael arrive at Har Sinai and receive the Ten Commandments. As we discussed in our first shiur on Parshat Kedoshim, the mitzvot in chapter 19 are presented in a manner quite similar to the Ten Commandments in Parshat Yitro. Hence Matan Torah would be parallel to Vayikra chapter 19.

Finally, the Ten Commandments are followed by Parshat MISHPATIM, which introduces an entire set of the civil laws, together with the specific punishment that BET-DIN must execute for each transgression. Here we find a parallel to Vayikra chapter 20, for there too we find the specific punishments that BET-DIN must execute for the transgressions that were first mentioned in chapter 18.

The following chart summarizes this parallel between Shmot and Vayikra.

	SHMOT	**VAYIKRA**
REJECT Egyptian culture:	Va'era / 6:4-8	chapter 18
FOLLOW GOD'S LAWS:	Yitro / 20:1-14	chapter 19
PUNISHMENT BY BET DIN:	Mishpatim	chapter 20

A HIGHER LEVEL

The above chart can help better appreciate how Sefer Vayikra takes the principles of Sefer Shmot and raises them to a higher level. It can also help us understand the repetition of the arayot in Vayikra chapter 20.

Just as Vayikra chapter 19 takes the Ten Commandments of

Sefer Shmot and raises them to a higher level, so too Vayikra chapter 20 can be understood as an 'upgrade' for the laws in Parshat Mishpatim. Recall from our study of Parshat Mishpatim how chapter 21 details the punishments that bet din is instructed to enforce for the most basic cases of CIVIL laws. Albeit the importance of this judicial system, it can be found in almost every society. In Sefer Vayikra, where the Torah emphasizes how we are to become a special nation - an AM KADOSH, bet din is now entrusted with the power to enforce not only the classic civil laws, but also the special laws that Bnei Yisrael must keep. In this manner, bet din duty is to enact punishment in order to assure that Bnei Yisrael indeed become an "am kadosh".

TO WARN OR TO PUNISH

Nevertheless, we must still explain why it is necessary for Sefer Vayikra to first explain what is not permitted WITHOUT mentioned punishment by bet din, and then later repeat those laws together with their specific punishments. Furthermore, we must explain why these two parshiot that deal with the same topic (i.e. chapters 18 and 20) are interrupted by the laws of 'kedoshim tihiyu' in chapter 19.

This progression and parallel could be understood as striking the fine balance between realism and idealism. Ideally, we would prefer that the individual follow God's laws simply because God has commanded, and NOT out of fear that bet din may punish him. Therefore, the Torah first presents these laws while reminding us that ANI HASHEM, without mentioning at all that bet din is required to enforce them. Only afterward, God commands our society to set up a court system that will enforce these laws, in order to make sure that Am Yisrael indeed does become a GOY KADOSH.

However, the enforcement of these laws by bet din must be preceded by a set of laws that focus on the kedusha of Am Yisrael, and hence how Bnei Yisrael SHOULD act. Once Bnei Yisrael can indeed establish a society of an AM KADOSH (by fulfilling the mitzvot of chapter 19), then it becomes important that bet din becomes involved in enacting punishment for those who transgress the laws of kedusha as well. Nonetheless, the emphasis of bet din must be first on foremost of the positive aspects of 'kedoshim tiyihu', while their responsibility to punish transgressors should become secondary to that.

This concept of KEDUSHA that God expects that we act on a higher level IN ORDER that we become worthy to be His people is reflected in the concluding pasuk of chapter 20:

> "And you shall be HOLY for Me, for I am Lord am Holy, for I HAVE SEPARATED YOU FROM THE OTHER NATIONS TO BE MINE!"
>
> (see 20:26).

THE NAME FOR BET DIN

Even though our entire shiur has assumed that the punishments detailed in chapter 20 must be carried out by Bet-Din (the Jewish court), Chumash never uses those words to describe the court. Instead, the opening psukim require that the "am ha'aretz" – the People of the Land – shall stone him (see Vayikra 20:2).

Rashi (on that pasuk) immediately comments that "mot yu'mat" [he shall be put to death / 20:2] refers to a court decision made by Bet Din – yet the question remains, why the phrase "am ha'aretz" is used.

Rashi offers several explanations. The first (quoting Torat Kohanim) is rather technical, explaining that if Bet Din cannot execute its decision, then the people should come to their assistance. In his second explanation, Rashi offers a more thematic approach (also based on Torat Kohanim), suggesting that the "aretz" – the Land – refers to the special nature of the Land of Israel – which deserves to be inherited **on the condition** that the people of Israel act properly, and can be thrown out should they defile the land (see Vayikra 18:24-29 & 20:22-24).

As this type of behavior could cause the 'People of the Land' to lose their land, therefore the 'People of the Land' are responsible to punish those who transgress, for those people are not only hurting themselves, they are harming the entire nation.

REPRESENTING GOD OR THE PEOPLE?

It is interesting to note that in Parshat Mishpatim, which also discusses punishments – Chumash consistently refers to Bet-Din as "elohim" (see Shmot 21:6, 22:7-8,27 and the commentators); while in Parshat Kedoshim, Bet Din is referred to as "am ha'aretz".

One could suggest a very simple reason. In regard to transgressions in the realm of civil law ["bein adam 'chaveiro], the judges of Bet Din must feel that they carry the responsibility of God on their shoulder; while in the realm of 'religious law' ["bein adam la'Makom"], Bet Din must carry the responsibility of the entire nation – who are striving to create a society of an "am kadosh".

In that sense, Bet Din carry a 'double-identity'. On the one hand, they represent their society, but on the other hand they must also feel as though they are working on behalf of God Himself.

As we strive to grow as an "am kadosh", we must also strive to be worthy of Judges of this stature.

shabbat shalom,
menachem

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FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. OV & YID'ONI

In our shiur, we did not explain why specifically the law of OV & YID'ONI is singled out, and used to conclude the parshia.

First of all, note Rashi on this pasuk, who quotes the midrash halacha that learns out from this special structure that just like OV & YID'ONI who is 'chayav KARET' (see 20:6) and with warning (see 19:31) he is 'chayav sekila' [stoning / see 20:27], so too for any other transgression... - see Rashi!

From a thematic angle, based on Sefer Devarim, OV & YID'ONI takes on additional significance. See Devarim 18:9-15 where the Torah forbids us to approach any type of 'future teller' or 'soothsayer' including the OV & YID'ONI. Note how similar those psukim are to Vayikra chapter 18!! There, the Torah explains how we must follow the guidance of a NAVI, and not look for guidance from those who use 'other methods'.

Every nation has its spiritual leaders. To become an AM KADOSH, we must be sure not to follow after these people who offer 'shortcuts' to spirituality by 'bringing up the dead' or 'reading palms' etc. As God's nation, we must recognize that our fate is solely in the hands of God, and thus a direct function of our deeds. Belief that certain events are pre-determined or believing that by bringing up the dead we can get an 'inside word' on what will happen, etc. negates the very basics of Judaism and our belief in 'hashgachat Hashem' as a function of our deeds. [see daily kriyat shma etc. / 've-akamal']

B. VE-HITKADISHTEM...

In the above shiur, we saw how the concept of KEDUSHA was introduced hand in hand with the mitzva that bet din enact punishment against those who do not follow God's special laws.

Here, we find an amazing parallel (once again) to the events at Har Sinai. Recall that first time in the Torah that we find an act of KEDUSHA by man [i.e. 've-kidashtem...'] is at Har Sinai, when God commands Moshe to prepare Bnei Yisrael for Matan Torah: "Go to the people - ve-KIDASHTAM" (Shmot 19:10), and again in 19:14: "va-yered Moshe, va-yeKADESH et ha-am..."

What did Moshe do that the Torah considers it 'leKADESH'? Review 19:10-14, noting that Moshe warns them: "do not go near your wives" (19:15) [similar to the laws of arayot), and sets up policemen to guard the mountain instructing them to KILL anyone who touches the mountain [by stoning / see 19:12-13]! This is quite similar to the laws in chapter 20 which introduce KEDUSHA with appointing bet din to enforce God's laws which relate to the fact that the SHCHINA is now present in the camp.

Parshas Kedoshim: Speak to the Entire Congregation

By Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

This shiur is dedicated to the memory of the thousands of brave soldiers of Tzahal and the underground who gave their lives for the creation and protection of Medinat Yisra'el, for the Sanctity of God's Name, the Nation and the Land. May their memories always be a shining inspiration for us as we move from the solemnity of Yom haZikkaron to the celebration and Hallel of Yom ha'Atzma'ut.

KOL ADAT B'NEI YISRA'EL

Our Parashah is introduced with the fairly uncommon mention of Kol Adat B'nei Yisra'el – (the entire congregation of the B'nei Yisra'el); there are only two previous times when Mosheh gave commands directly to the whole nation: Regarding the Korban Pesach (Sh'mot 12:3) and regarding the construction of the Mishkan (Sh'mot 35:1,4). In those two cases, the direct participation of every individual is obviously needed: Everyone had to donate to the construction of the Mishkan and everyone had to personally participate in the Korban Pesach. In the case of Parashat Kedoshim, we are faced with an anomaly: A list of laws, not unlike many Mitzvot given earlier, which are to be pronounced in front of the entire congregation. Why was Parashat Kedoshim said b'Hakhel (with the whole congregation assembled)? (see Torat Kohanim [cited in Rashi] at the beginning of our Parashah).

A second question arises from the formulation of the first "command" in our Parashah:

> Kedoshim Tihyu, Ki Kadosh Ani Hashem Eloheikhem
> *"Be holy, for I, Hashem your God, am Holy."*

What is the Torah commanding us here? We are accustomed to Mitzvot which direct us in a specific way – either to action (e.g. eating Matzot, taking a Lulav) or to avoiding an action (e.g. stealing, murder). The command to "be holy" is unspecified and gives us no clue as to how we are to fulfill it.

There are two ways to approach this problem. We could either view the statement as independent – in which case our questions stands and we need to identify the specific parameters and goals of this Mitzvah. Alternatively, we could view this statement as general, either explicated in later verses or itself an additional perspective on earlier verses.

II. KEDOSHIM TIHYU AS AN INDEPENDENT MITZVAH

RAMBAM'S VIEW

Ramban and Rambam, in different ways, understand this Mitzvah to be independent. Rambam, in his fourth introductory paragraph to the Sefer haMitzvot (Shoresh #4), maintains that this statement is not to be reckoned as a Mitzvah (among the reckoning of 613 Mitzvot), since it is general in nature (what the Rambam calls a Mitzvah Kolelet.) Rambam equates the command to "be holy" with commands such as "keep all of My Mitzvot" etc.

RAMBAN'S VIEW

Ramban, in a very different style, assumes an independent stand to this command:

Abstain from the forbidden sexual relationships [mentioned in the preceding section] and from [other] sin, because wherever you find [in the Torah] a warning to guard against immorality, you find the mention of 'holiness'". This is Rashi's language.

[note: we can see from Rashi's comments that he does not view Kedoshim Tih'yu as purely independent, rather it underscores the sexual prohibitions presented in the previous chapter. As is clear immediately, Ramban differs on this critical point.]

But in the Torat Kohanim, I have seen it mentioned without any qualification [i.e. without any particular reference to immorality, as Rashi expressed it], saying: "Be self-restraining." Similarly, the Rabbis taught there: "And you shall sanctify yourselves, and be holy, for I am Holy. Just as I am Holy, so be you holy. Just as I am Pure, so be you pure." And in my

opinion, this abstinence does not refer only to restraint from acts of immorality, as the Rabbi [Rashi] wrote, but it is rather the self-control mentioned throughout the Talmud, which confers upon those who practice it the name of P'rushim, [literally: "those who are separated" from self-indulgence, as will be explained, or those who practice self-restraint]. The meaning thereof is as follows: The Torah has admonished us against immorality and forbidden foods, but permitted sexual intercourse between man and his wife, and the eating of [certain] meat and wine. If so, a man of desire could consider this to be a permission to be passionately addicted to sexual intercourse with his wife or many wives, and be among winebibbers, among gluttonous eaters of flesh , and speak freely all profanities, since this prohibition has not been [expressly] mentioned in the Torah, and thus he will become a Naval biR'shut haTorah (sordid person within the permissible realm of the Torah)! Therefore, after having listed the matters which He prohibited altogether, Scripture followed them up by a general command that we practice moderation even in matters which are permitted, [such as in the following]: One should minimize sexual intercourse, similar to that which the Rabbis have said: "So that the disciples of the Sages should not be found together with their wives as often as the hens," and he should not engage in it except as required in fulfillment of the commandment thereof. He should also sanctify himself [to self-restraint] by using wine in small amounts, just as Scripture calls a Nazirite "holy" [for abstaining from wine and strong drink], and he should remember the evils which the Torah mentioned as following from [drinking wine] in the cases of Noach and Lot. Similarly, he should keep himself away from impurity [in his ordinary daily activity], even though we have not been admonished against it in the Torah. Likewise, he should guard his mouth and tongue from being defiled by excessive food and lewd talk, similar to what Scripture states, and every mouth speaks wantonness , and he should purify himself in this respect until he reaches the degree known as [complete] "self-restraint," as the Rabbis said concerning Rabbi Chiyya, that never in his life did he engage in unnecessary talk. It is with reference to these and similar matters that this general commandment [Kedoshim Tihyu] is concerned, after He had enumerated all individual deeds which are strictly forbidden, so that cleanliness of hands and body, are also included in this precept, just like the Rabbis have said: "And you shall sanctify yourselves : this refers to the washing of hands before meals. And be you holy : this refers to the washing of hands after meals [before the reciting of Birkat haMazon]. For I am Holy – this refers to the spiced oil" [with which they used to rub their hands after a meal.] For although these [washing and perfuming of hands] are commandments of Rabbinic origin, yet Scripture's main intention is to warn us of such matters, that we should be [physically] clean and [ritually] pure, and separated from the common people who soil themselves with luxuries and unseemly things. And such is the way of the Torah, that after it lists certain specific prohibitions, it includes them all in a general precept. Thus after warning with detailed laws regarding all business dealings between people, such as not to steal or rob or to wrong one another, and other similar prohibitions, He said in general: And you shall do that which is right and good: , thus including under a Mitzvat Aseh the duty of doing that which is right and of agreeing to a compromise [when not to do so would be inequitable]; as well as all requirements to act "beyond" the line of justice [i.e. to be generous in not insisting upon one's rights as defined by the strict letter of the law, but to agree to act "beyond" that line of the strict law] for the sake of pleasing one's fellowman, as I will explain when I reach there [that verse], with the will of haKadosh Barukh Hu. Similarly in the case of the Sabbath, He prohibited doing certain classes of work by means of a Mitzvat Lo Ta'aseh, and painstaking labors [not categorized as "work", such as transferring heavy loads in one's yard from one place to another, etc.] He included under a general Mitzvat Aseh, as it is said, but on the seventh day you shall rest. I will yet explain this, with God's help.

III. KEDOSHIM TIHYU AS THE TELOS OF MITZVOT

As noted above, Rashi maintains (unlike Rambam and Ramban) that Kedoshim Tihyu does not stand independently, rather it is a proper summary to the sexual prohibitions listed in the previous chapter (and, perhaps, a "distant introduction" to that same list in the following chapter). There are other Rishonim (notably S'forno) who maintain that Kedoshim Tihyu is the "topic sentence" for most, if not all of the Mitzvot in chapter 19. To wit, Kedoshim Tihyu is a general command – and the Mitzvot which follow direct us to behave in such a fashion as will insure our achieving this lofty status.

For purposes of this shiur, we will adopt this approach and attempt to understand the role of the various Mitzvot given (although, for brevity's sake, we will only discuss those Mitzvot mentioned in the first 19 verses of the chapter) within the scheme of Kedoshim Tihyu. Before going further, I'd like to pose two questions on the wording of verse 2.

Besides our concern as to meaning (what does it mean to be Kadosh?), there is a grammatical sense here that bears inquiry. Many of the Mitzvot given to the B'nei Yisra'el are presented in the grammatically singular form – even though they are given to everyone as individuals. The clearest example of this is the Ten Statements (Sh'mot Ch. 20, D'varim Ch. 5 – see Ramban at the beginning of Sh'mot 20).

Even though these statements were given to the entire people, they were given in the singular (e.g. Zakhor as opposed to Zikhru). Why is the goal-statement of our Parashah, Kedoshim Tihyu, presented in the plural? The second half of the

statement is much more troubling – …Ki Kadosh Ani Hashem Eloheikhem – "…for I, Hashem your God, am Holy". The transitional word Ki, usually translated as "because", seems to make no sense here. The statement is presented as a cause and effect – since God is Holy, the Congregation of Yisra'el should be holy. What is the reasoning here? How does the fact of God's sanctity imply ours? Another question presents itself once we start looking through the various Mitzvot in this Parashah. At the conclusion of many of the verses, the refrain Ani YHVH or Ani Hashem Eloheikhem is found as a concluding statement. What is the rhyme and reason of this "signature"? (This is a double question – what does it mean, and what is the logic behind its placement at particular junctures.)

Once we look at the Parashah in greater detail, two specific Mitzvot (or groups of Mitzvot) catch our eye as being somewhat incongruous with the theme of the Parashah. In vv. 5-8, after being (reminded) (commanded) regarding fearing our parents, observing Shabbat and avoiding idolatry – areas of Halakhah which we would all agree hold central places in our religious consciousness – the Torah elaborates the law of pigul, of the goodwill offering which is eaten after its due time (Halakhically translated into an offering regarding which the officiant intended it to be eaten later than its due time and had that intent while officiating). This would seem to be a relatively "minor" area of law, one which does not seem to fit the "grand" nature of the call to be holy and the areas of honor for parents, Shabbat observance and avoiding idolatry. What is the role of pigul in this scheme?

One final question: After the crescendo of interpersonal Mitzvot, climaxing in the credo of Jewish ethics: v'Ahavta l'Re'akha Kamokhah – (you shall love your fellow as yourself – v. 18), the Torah follows with a command to keep God's Hukim, specifically the laws of Kil'ayim (not mixing wool and linen in clothing, not mixing seeds and not cross- breeding animals). This seems like a big "letdown" after the glorious call to fellowship in the previous few verses. What is the logic behind the placement of this command/group of commands?

To summarize our questions:

1) Why was this Parashah to be said to the entire congregation?

2) Why is this command given in the plural?

3) What is the meaning of "Kedoshim Tihyu"?

4) What is the logic behind "…for I, Hashem your God, am holy"?

5) What is the meaning behind the refrain Ani YHVH?

6) What is the role of the law of pigul in our Parashah?

7) What is the logic behind the placement of Hukot Kil'ayim?

IV. FROM "GOY KADOSH" TO "KEDOSHIM TIHYU"

When we compare the last time that our entire people was addressed – at the foot of Mount Sinai – with this time, we note a striking similarity:

You shall be unto me a kingdom of Kohanim and a Goy Kadosh (holy nation). (Sh'mot 19:6).

In the same way, this address to the entire people begins with a charge to be holy; but, there's the rub. As opposed to Goy Kadosh – a directive to the nation as a singular political unit to manifest sanctity – in our case, the charge is directed to each individual – Kedoshim Tihyu. Why the switch?

When we chart the sequence of Mitzvot given to us until this point, we note that they follow a sequence designed to create a just and holy society – but are not, for the most part, addressed to the spiritual growth and sanctity of the individual. We can break the sequence into three sections:

A) Sefer haB'rit (Sh'mot 20-23):

Besides the Ten Statements (see our shiur on that topic, found at http://www.torah.org/advanced/mikra/sh/dt.57.2.5.html),

nearly all of the Mitzvot given in this section are geared to creating and maintaining a just society. From the laws of murder, kidnapping and self-defense to the protection of the downtrodden and avoidance of judicial corruption, the Sefer haB'rit inheres the blueprint for a theistically-focused ethical society. (As implied, there are a few apparent exceptions to this rule; proper treatment of this subject is beyond the scope of this shiur.)

B) The Mishkan (Sanctuary – Sh'mot 25-Vayyikra 10):

Once the society is just and safeguarded against corruption and oppression, it is ready to receive the Divine Presence. Keep in mind that the goal of the Mishkan was to enshrine God among the people, not in the tent itself (Sh'mot 25:8). Once the Mishkan was constructed, God commanded us regarding those methods via which the community and the individual might come closer (Korban) to Him. Although, as mentioned, this system was made available to individuals – both as expiation and to support the desire for a closeness to the Divine Presence – it was still within the realm of the communal sanctity of the Mishkan.

C) Tum'ah (Impurity – Vayyikra 11-18):

Interestingly, nearly all of these laws (Forbidden foods and their impact on ritual purity [Ch. 11]; childbirth [Ch. 12]; scale disease and its attendant rituals [Ch. 13 & 14]; sexual emissions [Ch. 15]; purification of the Mishkan from its impurities [Ch. 16]; prohibitions relating to "outside" slaughtering [Ch. 17]; prohibitions relating to sexual relations [Ch. 18]) are addressed to the individual. (The one exception is Ch. 16, the purification of the Mishkan.)

The reason for this can be explained by way of an analogy from the world of group dynamics. For example, when a group is singing together (e.g. at a Shabbaton), the entire group is considered to be singing, not one individual. To the extent that an individual is leading the group or deciding on the next song, he or she is doing so as a representative of the group, not as an individual. On the other hand, if even one person disrupts the singing (by talking, laughing, trying to sing something else etc.), that can totally defeat the group effort. In other words – a group effort is supported by the group but can be destroyed by one individual.

In much the same way, we credit the manifestation of God's Presence among the people to the group; nevertheless, one individual can destroy that experience and drive the Shekhinah away through one of the various behaviors which bring Tum'ah into the realm of the Divine. The third section – of Tum'ah – is indeed addressed to the individual, because he or she has the ability to destroy the national enterprise of Kedushah.

In any case, [nearly] all of the Mitzvot given to us until this point are geared to creating, enhancing and maintaining the national Kedushah as reflected by God's Presence among the people.

As we move into our Parashah, we note a clear shift in emphasis – the Torah is now addressing the individual and demanding a "higher" level of spirituality. It is no longer enough to be a member of a Goy Kadosh and not to disrupt that Kedushah; each individual is now called to his own spiritual growth – to finally achieve the ultimate in human heroism, which was the original Divine mandate for humanity:

And God said: Let us make Man in Our Image… and God created Man in His Image, in the Image of God He created him… (B'resheet 1:26-27).

Why then is this Divine charge given in the plural – Kedoshim Tih'yu – if it is addressed to the individual? The answer lies in understanding the basic tension of Jewish values. Unlike some Eastern worship-systems, we do not maintain that individual spiritual perfection is the sole goal of our existence. We live in this world and have practical obligations towards it. On the other, we do not maintain that we should negate our personae to the communal will and effort, ignoring our own talents, desires and ambitions.

As such, the enterprise of individual Kedushah can not be taken out of the realm of the community – and we must be addressed to grow as individuals within the context of interpersonal relationships as well as internally. Therefore, the Torah addresses us as an entire nation – but, instead of a Holy Nation, we are now called to add "Nation of Holy Individuals" to our title.

V. VERSE 2 REVISITED

We can now answer our first two questions:

1) This Parashah to be said to the entire congregation because, unlike earlier Parashiot which were addressed to the national project of Kedushah – and thus could be communicated to the leaders first – this Parashah is addressed to the personal Kedushah-growth of each individual.
2) The command was given in the plural because it was addressed to the individuals as they behave both personally and socially.

KI KADOSH ANI

We can now also answer the next two questions:

3) Kedoshim Tih'yu means that we should finally realize and actualize the Tzelem Elokim (Image of God) in which we were all created. Doing so means imitating God (within the limits imposed by both the laws of physics [i.e. science] and the laws of morality [i.e. the Torah]).

4) This also explains the logic behind "for I, Hashem your God, am holy"; since we were created in His Image (whatever that may mean; that is a shiur in and of itself), we are now called to reflect that Image through our own behavior. [Alternatively, we could read the Ki as an extended Kaf haDim'yon (the letter Kaf as a prefix indicates similarity) – i.e. "be holy LIKE I, Hashem your God, am Holy."]

VI. THE "ANI YHVH" REFRAIN

In order to understand the constant refrain of Ani YHVH in our Parashah (note that it continues – more sporadically – through Ch. 22), we'll deviate for a moment to investigate the central text of Hallel: Hodu lHashem Ki Tov, Ki l'Olam Has'do ("give thanks to YHVH, for He is good, for His kindness endures forever" – T'hillim 118:1).

The second verse in that chapter is Yomar Na Yisra'el, Ki l'Olam Has'do – lit. "let Yisra'el say: for His kindness endures forever". This sentence is a bit awkward, as the Ki ("…for…") at the beginning of the second half of this verse seems to point nowhere; an idea cannot begin with the introduction of an effect, it must be preceded by a cause (e.g. "He is good"). In addition, our custom of responding to the leader is not to echo his line (Yomar Na…), rather to repeat the first line. Why do we do this? [These two questions are equally germane in reference to the next two verses.]

I would like to suggest that the second verse should be understood as follows: Yomar Na Yisra'el [Hodu lHashem Ki Tov] Ki l'Olam Has'do.

In other words, the Psalmist is asking Yisra'el (and the House of Aharon and the God-fearers) to join in his praise which begins with Hodu…. Why then does the verse abbreviate this phrase? It is simply too long! Keep in mind that many of the T'hillim were composed to be recited by the Levi'im in antiphonal fashion in the Beit haMikdash – and, as such, meter was a significant consideration. The verse includes an ellipsis: Yomar Na Yisra'el: "…Ki l'Olam Has'do" – which explains our response and the awkward grammar.

The same approach can be utilized to explain the refrain of Ani Hashem [Eloheikhem] in our Parashah. The topic sentence of our Parashah is "Be holy, for I, Hashem your God, am Holy". The signature form Ani YHVH is an elliptical way of repeating the entire charge to God-like Kedushah. As an example, instead of reading Ish Imo v'Aviv Tira'u v'et Shab'totai Tish'moru, Ani Hashem Eloheikhem (Each man shall fear his mother and father; observe My Shabbatot, I am Hashem your God) (v. 3), read Ish Imo v'Aviv Tira'u v'et Shab'totai Tish'moru, [Kedoshim Tih'yu, Ki Kadosh] Ani Hashem Eloheikhem (Each man shall fear his mother and father; observe My Shabbatot, [be holy, for] I Hashem your God [am Holy]).

5) This answers our fifth question – the refrain of Ani YHVH is an abbreviated form of the topic sentence, marking each occurrence of this refrain as a demarcation of another dimension of Kedoshim Tih'yu. We can almost view the components of our Parashah as a list, each item concluding with a short form of the sentence which guides the entire section.

We can now examine the first several stages of our Parashah to better understand the call to individual Kedushah.

VII. FEARING PARENTS AND OBSERVING SHABBAT

Each man shall fear his parents, observe My Shabbatot, I am Hashem your God (v. 3)

Why are these two juxtaposed? In addition, the grammar of the first stich is uneven: It is first phrased in the singular (Ish Imo v'Aviv -"each man, his mother and father…") but ends in the plural (Tira'u – "you [plural] shall fear").

Rashi is sensitive to the first problem – and his answer will help us with the second. "Observe My Shabbatot": The text juxtaposed Sh'mirat Shabbat to fear of your father, to teach you that although I have warned you concerning fear of your father, if he tells you to desecrate Shabbat, do not heed him…"I am Hashem your God": you and your father are obligated to honor Me, therefore, do not heed him to violate My words."

This also explains the grammatical shift: God [through Mosheh] is addressing the entire nation, made up of many multi-generational families. Even though He is speaking to each individual son and daughter, even those parents have their own parents to respect and fear. That entire group has a greater mission and loyalty to keep in mind – we are all bound to God's commands.

The import of this balance is to keep any particular object of our honor or fear from becoming an end in and of itself – and keeps us from creating an obsession around it. Even though we are commanded to fear our parents, that fear should not become so overwhelming that it keeps us from heeding God's commands.

This is, indeed, a reflection of God's Sanctity – the goal of the whole enterprise. Although we often associate sanctity with isolation (a Nazirite is considered Kadosh – see Bamidbar 6:5), God's Holiness is one of synthesis and balance. On the one hand, God is transcendent; yet God is also immanent. This same balance is the (very challenging) goal of Kedoshim Tih'yu. The balance between fear of parents and loyalty to God's commands is one dimension of this imitation of the Divine.

VIII. DO NOT TURN TO THE FALSE GODS

The next verse uses a new verb in its repetition of the warning against idolatry. Al Tiph'nu – "Do not turn away to the false gods…". The Torah uses this verb to again stress the need for balance; one of the prevalent features of pagan worship is fetishism, such that the entire focus of the individual is geared to this worship-object. Although the Torah abhors idolatry for its demeaning of the worshipper and the inherent silliness of the notion (see MT Avodah Zarah 11:16), it may also be warning us away from fetishism and obsessive behavior.

[Note that nearly all Mitzvot have maximum limits; perhaps this is a way of assuring that no Mitzvah would be turned into an end in and of itself].

IX. PIGUL

Armed with our understanding of Ani YHVH as a "marker", we can now explain the role of pigul here. Note that the refrain does not show up again until the end of v. 10 – so pigul is included in one "Kedoshim- Tih'yu dimension" with the laws of Pe'ah, Leket, Peret and 'Olelot (various gleanings left for the poor during harvest). Shadal (Sh'mu'el David Luzzato, 19th century Italian commentator) suggests that the reasoning behind the law of pigul is akin to the gleanings. If the Torah had allowed a goodwill offering (Korban Sh'lamim) to be eaten over an indefinite time period, the individual would likely eat some, with his family and close friends, during the first few days after bringing it. He would then store it away and continue to "celebrate" with his entourage. Keep in mind that a Sh'lamim is brought from the flock or the herd – a large animal which cannot be devoured quickly. Since the Torah commands that a Sh'lamim must be eaten on the day that it is offered and the morrow – no later than the end of that second night, the one bringing the offering will perforce share it with many others. The assumption is that not only will this offering have a portion for God (burnt on the altar), a portion for the Kohanim (see Vayyikra 7:34) and a portion for the Yisra'el who brought it (see Rashi on Vayyikra 3:1) – it will also include the poor, since the one who brought it will have to share it around to make sure it is devoured on time.

This understanding of Pigul underscores another dimension of the balance and synthesis which is the desired type of Kedushah. Not only must both the "secular" and "holy" parts of our lives be informed by a desire to holiness – but those considerations must inform each other. Not only do we have to act compassionately and generously with the poor in our midst – we have to make that consideration a part and parcel of our Mikdash-experience.

This answers our sixth question – pigul is an integral piece of the Kedushah experience, as it ensures that we not "lose ourselves" in the sanctity of the Mikdash and forget our communal responsibilities.

X. VERSES 11-18: THE ETHICAL SOCIETY

As I mentioned in the shorter shiur sent out last week, these four groups of Mitzvot are geared towards elevating a society to the pinnacle of interpersonal sensitivity and empathy:

We start with the society which is rife with stealing – such that a person's word, even in court, is not to be trusted, where even God's Name is desecrated in the name of material gain. This is the society of "What's yours is mine and what's mine is mine" (Avot 5:10) – and verses 11 & 12 address this level of corruption and command us to move up from here.

Then – the society in which more subtle types of corruption exist – holding back pay, hurting people who won't find out that it's you – or won't even know about it. This is the society of "What's yours is mine and what's mine is yours" – without respect for boundaries. To this society, the Torah addresses verses 13 & 14.

We then look at a society which has moved up from these levels – but where there is still discrimination and favoritism in the system – and where idle gossip and "turning a blind eye" are the norm. "What's yours is yours and what's mine is mine" – i.e. mind your own business. To this society, the Torah addresses verses 15 & 16.

And then we move to build the ideal society: Once we have justice, revenge seems reasonable. And there seems to be no need for my letting you know that your behavior upsets me – or to be as concerned with your needs as I am with mine. We move from the just society to the holy society. All of the Mitzvot in these last two verses take us beyond justice – they move us towards compassion. Towards "What's mine is yours and what's yours is yours".

XI. HUKOT KIL'AYIM

Now, to our final question: Why does the Torah mention the prohibitions of cross-breeding, cross-planting and "woolsy-linsy" immediately after the glorious crescendo of "Love your fellow as yourself"? These three prohibitions are introduced with the phrase Et Hukotai Tish'moru – "Keep my Hukot". Although conventional wisdom holds that a Hok is a "non-rational" law (see Rashi at the beginning of Parashat Hukat, 19:2), the simple meaning of the word is "immutable law". See, for instance, Yirmiyahu 33:25, where he refers to the Hukot of heaven and earth. In Hebrew, the laws of physics are called Hukim, whereas rules of grammar are called Mishpatim. When the Torah says that we must observe God's Hukot, it means that we have to uphold and support the laws which God etched into the universe. Why is this the case – and how can we do so?

Keep in mind that our original mandate was to be "in God's Image" and to have dominion over the earth. If we look at the description of creation in the first chapter of B'resheet, we notice that there is a stress on order and closed cycles of reproduction and regeneration. The day ends here, the night begins here; the heavenly waters and earthly waters are separated; the land ends here and the water begins here; each tree and plant regenerates l'Mineihu (according to its own kind) and so on.

Since we are charged with being God's "caretakers" of the earth, it follows that we must not only continue the process of creation and order (note that our Rabbis say that a judge who renders perfect judgment is considered a partner with God in creation), but we must also not attempt to subvert that order.

Ramban (Vayyikra 19:19) provides two reasons for this limitation. If we attempt to usurp God's order, the implication is that God's creation is insufficient and somehow imperfect. In addition, he notes, many forms of usurpation of the natural order impair the reproductive ability of that species (witness the mule).

After having guided us to the perfectly ethical and compassionate society, the Torah addresses the next concern. Since we have (we think) achieved Kedoshim Tih'yu, and fully reflect God's sanctity, we may parlay that relationship into a full partnership and deign to improve upon His design. The lesson of Hukot Kil'ayim is the limited nature of our partnership – we may endeavor to actualize our Godly Image, but we must never forget that it is a limited partnership. The parallel of Kedoshim Tih'yu with Kadosh Ani must never lead us to arrogantly forgetting our role in God's world. This lofty goal is only achieved when we not only maintain balance – but also perspective.

Studies Institute of the Yeshiva of Los Angeles.

Parshat Acherei Mot and Kedoshim: Holiness Revisited

by Rabbi Eitan Mayer

HOLINESS REVISITED:

A few weeks ago, in discussing Parashat Shemini, we paid special attention to the term "kedusha," usually translated "holiness." We often leave "holiness" pretty much unexplained, mostly, perhaps, because it is difficult to define holiness in terms of anything else. We rely on an 'intuitive' or general sense of what kedusha means rather than trying to define it concretely. This view of kedusha understands the concept of holiness as a spiritual quality which inheres in various entities (times, places, objects); kedusha can be achieved by people, too, when they perform the mitzvot. In this sense, kedusha is not a means, it is an end.

KEDUSHA AS A STRATEGY:

But we took a different tack in our discussion several weeks ago, attempting to understand what "kedusha" might mean on a more concrete level. The perspective we developed saw kedusha not as an inhering spiritual quality, not as an end in itself, but as a strategy, a way of providing opportunities for important values to be concretized. Kedusha is not the ultimate goal, for all it means is "dedication"; when something becomes "kadosh," that means that it is specially dedicated to a religiously important purpose. When the Torah commands us to make *ourselves* holy, for example, the Torah is not instructing us to seek some elusive, difficult-to-define spiritual quality, it is instructing us to be *dedicated*! "Kedoshim tihyu," the words for which Parashat Kedoshim is named, does not mean "Be holy" so much as it means "Be dedicated." Dedicated to what? The Torah immediately provides concrete details: the full range of mitzvot is what we are called to perform with complete dedication -- the ritual, the moral, the interpersonal, the cultic (sacrificial).

We also noted that almost every context where kedusha is mentioned in the Torah in connection with a mitzvah, is a context which involves restrictions and prohibitions. What is it about kedusha that brings in prohibitions? If we understand kedusha as that metaphysical 'something,' it may be hard to say; but if we understand kedusha as 'dedication,' I think it becomes clear: something which is 'dedicated' cannot be openly accessible to everyone and everything, equally usable for everyone's purposes, because 'dedication' means that the thing in question is devoted to specific goals.

For example, the Torah describes a set of days in the calendar as "mikra'ei kodesh," "Times in which holiness is proclaimed." These are more familiar to us as Shabbat, Yom Kippur, Rosh Ha-Shana, Pesah, Shavuot, and Succot. These days are dedicated to particular themes; we are meant to spend these times thinking about important ideas. If we were to spend these days at work, we would never have that opportunity. This is why the Torah consistently connects the holiness of these days ("mikra'ei kodesh") to the prohibition of doing creative work on these days (and eating, drinking, etc. on Yom Kippur). The Torah's declaration that these days are holy, dedicated, implies that they are reserved for special activities, and that our normal (work) activities cannot continue. Kedusha, then, creates a space of time which we are commanded to fill with a particular content. On Shabbat, we are to contemplate the Creation and the Exodus; on Yom Kippur, we are to contemplate our sins and work toward teshuva; and so on:

DEDICATION --> RESTRICTION --> OPPORTUNITY.

THE "ARAYOT":

Parashat Ahrei Mot and Parashat Kedoshim present a series of mitzvot which restrict the sexual relationships available to us. These prohibitive mitzvot are known loosely as the "arayot," an untranslatable term which means roughly, "cardinal sexual crimes" (I say 'loosely' because not all of the crimes included here are necessarily classified as 'arayot' in the strict halakhic sense). The Torah and Hazal connect these mitzvot in particular with the idea of kedusha. According to the understanding developed above, kedusha creates protected space for important values. What values are being protected here?

There are at least three ways to look for evidence on this question:

1) Looking at the list of cardinal sexual crimes to see if they fit into a theme or themes.
2) Looking for the rationale or rationales provided by the mefarshim.
3) Looking for the rationale or rationales provided by the text of the Torah itself.

1) With which individuals are sexual relationships restricted here?

a) Incest: mother, stepmother, sister, granddaughter, stepsister, aunt, daughter-in-law, brother's wife, wife's daughter or granddaughter, wife's sister.
b) A menstruating woman.
c) Adultery with a married woman.
d) Sex between men.
e) Bestiality.

This list really becomes meaningful when we compare it to the list of crimes included in, say, the Rambam's discussion of various sexual mitzvot in Moreh ha-Nevukhim (Guide of the Perplexed), 3:49:

a) All of the above crimes.
b) Rape.
c) Seduction.
d) Prostitution by men or women.
e) Sota: a woman suspected by her husband of infidelity.
f) Yibbum

Clearly, the Rambam's list is much more inclusive than the list in the arayot section in the Torah. The Rambam is being thorough, relating to all of the sexual crimes and positive mitzvot. Since it seems clear that the parashat ha-arayot is not all-inclusive of sexual crimes, what is it really about? What are its themes, which justify leaving out the rest of the sexual crimes?

2) Looking for the rationale or rationales provided by the mefarshim.

What do the various mefarshim (commentators) suggest the Torah is trying to teach us? We might have expected that mefarshim would either remain silent on the issue or consider these crimes inherently immoral or inherently disgusting. Indeed, this is part of the thrust of the Ramban's opinion:

RAMBAN, VAYIKRA 18:6

". . . The arayot are among the 'hukkim,' matters which are "decrees of the King." "Decrees" are matters which occur to the King's mind as the best way to guide His kingdom; He knows the need and the benefit in each commandment He commands, and He tells it only to the wise men among His advisors."

On the other hand, as we will see, the Ramban does speculate to some degree about the rationale for the arayot. Other mefarshim go much further. The Sefer Ha-Hinukh cites both the Rambam and the Ramban:

SEFER HA-HINUKH -- MITZVAH 190

"As to the reason that relatives are prohibited, the Rambam wrote that the point is that the Torah wants to distance us from the sexual act, other than what is necessary for procreation or as a mitzvah; it therefore prohibited the relatives, since one is likely to stumble through them because they are always available.

"The Ramban, however, said that this reason is very weak--would the Torah impose excision ["karet"] for these

[relatives] because they are always available, and yet would allow a man to marry a hundred women, or a thousand! Instead, he [the Ramban] said, 'According to logic, this is one of the secrets of Creation, something attached to the soul, and is included with the "sod ha-ibbur" [understood by commentators to mean that incest produces children whose souls are somehow defective].'

"I have also seen that the Rambam offers another reason, on the peshat level, in my opinion: he says that the Torah wants to prevent us from behaving presumptuously by having intimacy with a woman whom we are commanded to honor. He [the Rambam] makes strenuous efforts to explain most of the arayot on this basis, but repeating all of that would take too long.

In discussing the various arayot as they come up in the arayot section, the Sefer Ha-Hinukh adds whatever rationales he believes are specific to those prohibitions. Some examples:

SEFER HA-HINUKH -- MITZVAH 191

"'Not to reveal the nakedness of one's father's wife' . . . the roots of this mitzvah are what we have already written about the close relatives [in general]. We can also say that the reason is that this is disrespect toward one's father."

SEFER HA-HINUKH -- MITZVAH 206

"'Not to sleep with two sisters' . . . the roots of the area of arayot, we have already written above. But my heart also tells me that the Torah forbids marrying two sisters because the Master of Peace desires peace among all of His creations, and certainly among those creations that nature and logic decree there should be peace, not strife and competition all day."

SEFER HA-HINUKH -- MITZVAH 209

"'Not to sleep with other men' . . . the roots of this mitzvah are that Hashem desires that the world be filled and settled, and therefore commanded that we not destroy our seed through sleeping with other men, for that is truly destruction of seed through something which has no procreative purpose at all and is not a mitzvah, besides the fact that this filth is disgusting in the eyes of anyone who has common sense . . . and based on this [the prohibition of sex for non-procreative/mitzvah purposes], the Sages said that it is forbidden to marry a woman to a minor, for it is like zenut [sex for the sake of pleasure alone]; and also that a man should not marry either a very old woman or a barren woman who cannot bear children."

Despite the Ramban's suggestion that the arayot are either "hukkim" or are based on a mystical idea, he does not hesitate to offer a rationale for the prohibition of the nida, the menstruating woman:

RAMBAN, VAYIKRA 18:19

"'A woman in the nida state of impurity': the Torah forbids the nida because of the reason I have already mentioned, that the Torah permits sexual intimacy only for the purpose of procreation . . . ."

Shadal (Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Lutzatto), in his Torah commentary, offers what is to some degree a synthesis of some of the approaches above:

SHADAL, VAYIKRA CH. 18

"The purpose of the sexual prohibitions is not, as the Rambam thought (Moreh Ha-Nevukhim 3:49), to cut down on the amount of intercourse, for the Torah did not forbid having many wives (except for a king), and neither did it forbid very frequent intercourse with one woman. Instead, the reason for the prohibitions is for the good of society. With regard to married women, the reason [for the prohibition] is obvious: to prevent violence,

strife, and murder, all of which would result from adultery. And even if there were a man who was willing to allow this and free his wife to be intimate with a rich man, it is forbidden because of the damage it would cause to the character of the nation as a whole. The prohibitions of intimacy with men [for other men] and animals is because they are unnatural acts; if they were permitted, people would not marry women to the same degree.

"The arayot which are "she'er basar" [close relatives] are forbidden in order to encourage the success of the household, the development of proper midot [character traits], and the success of the entire nation. For taking one's mother, stepmother, father's sister, or father's brother's wife are acts which are against the requirement to honor one's father and mother, and neglecting honor of one's father and mother destroys one's midot and destroys the structure of the household . . . . The reason for the prohibition of marrying one's sister seems to be for the good of the nation: if one's sister were permitted, most men would marry their sisters, and each family would become like a nation unto itself, and the families would not intermarry and mix with each other. The nation would not be like one nation, but instead like many nations, distant from each other and not loving each other.

SUMMARY:

We have seen the following rationales among the mefarshim for the arayot as a group or for particular arayot; these are the values or structures being protected by the kedusha (--> restriction) of the arayot prohibitions:

1) To decrease the amount of sexual activity available to people.
2) The rationale is hidden, as the arayot are "hukkim."
3) To preserve the sense of respect one must maintain toward various relatives.
4) To prevent the sexual act from becoming a vehicle for anything but procreation or a mitzvah.
5) To maintain peace within the family.
6) To insure that new souls which are brought into the world are not defective in some way.

One theme which can be drawn from several of these rationales is the protection of the family as a unit for reproduction and for healthy growth and support. In this sense, the arayot may be split into two categories:

1) Those arayot whose purpose is to protect the family as a unit for healthy growth and support.
2) Those arayot whose purpose is to protect the family as a unit for reproduction.

Under the first category, we would include the following, for example:
a) All of one's close relatives, such as one's parent, one's child, or one's sibling.
b) People who are closely related to each other, such as a woman and her daughter, or two sisters.
c) Married women.

Under the second category, we would include:
a) A nida.
b) Bestiality.
c) The male homosexual act.

All of the crimes in the first category threaten either our own familial relationship with these people (sleeping with one's mother, for example, threatens the requisite respect due her and also destroys the familial structural boundaries between son and mother), or threaten the relationship between two other people (marrying two sisters, for example, threatens the relationship between the sisters; sleeping with a married woman threatens the relationship between her and her husband). On the other hand, all of the crimes in the second category are cases in which the sexual act becomes an outlet for desires other than procreation.

[In a sense, when humans engage in the sexual act in an effort to be (pro)creative and thereby emulate Hashem's creativity, they are achieving one of the fundamental goals of human life as a tzelem Elokim. This is made explicit by Hashem's charge to humanity just after He created it, and again after He re-established it

after the Flood: our power to make ourselves "images of God" is explicitly linked to "peru u-revu," our power to emulate Hashem by creating. On the other hand, when humans engage in the sexual act with intentions other than procreation or the creation of a relationship with procreative ends, the act becomes animal-like, and deserves the comparison implicit in the Torah's grouping sex with a nida along with bestiality. I do not mean, of course, to compare a nida to an animal, God forbid.]

THE TEXT:

Although I do not have time to offer details, there are some indications in the text of the parashat ha-arayot (in Perek 18) which support the idea that the family is what is being protected. The Torah distinguishes implicitly between "she'er" prohibitions and "ervat X" prohibitions. The former category includes the closest relatives: one's children, siblings, and parents. Whenever the term is used here, it is always in the sense, "Do not share intimacy with X; she is the 'she'er' of your Y," where X is the forbidden relative, and Y is a person whom you are required to respect. For example, the Torah tells us that one's father's sister is forbidden because "she is the 'she'er' of your father." If one could approach one's father's sister in this manner, one's respect for one's father would be diminished.

The latter category, "ervat X," includes relatives who are not one's own close relatives, but who are instead people with sexual commitments to X, where X is a close relative of one's own. For example, the Torah prohibits intimacy between a man and his stepmother, not because the man is closely related to his stepmother, but because "ervat avikha hi"--literally, "it is the nakedness of your father" that you are uncovering, in a sense, not only the nakedness of the stepmother. Intimacy with the stepmother jeopardizes not only the relationship between her and one's father (as does any case of adultery), it also threatens the relationship between one and one's father.

In terms of the category of crimes which are meant to prevent intimacy which is not aimed toward procreation, it is interesting to note that the Torah includes among the arayot a crime which seems completely out of place: the prohibition of Molekh. Molekh was a form of idol worship which seems to have involved sacrificing children (although the issue is debated). In any event, in the context of specifically the arayot of nida, male homosexual sex, and bestiality, the Torah places the prohibition of sacrificing children, hinting, perhaps, that all of these crimes share one thing: they are all inimical to procreation, or, more pointedly, they are all paths which take the potential for propagation of children and direct it toward other purposes.

May our families be places of support for growth and development, and may our efforts toward creativity of all types be successful.

Shabbat Shalom

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for PARSHAT ACHAREI MOT

In the middle of Parshat Acharei Mot, an abrupt change takes place in Sefer Vayikra.

Even though its first 17 chapters dealt exclusively with laws that relate to the Mishkan, in chapter 18 we find a complete section about forbidden marital relationships [better known as the "arayot"] that appear to be totally unrelated to the Mishkan.

Then, in Parshat Kedoshim, we find yet another set of laws (mostly ethical) that have almost no connection at all to the Mishkan.

So what keeps Sefer Vayikra together?

Should we conclude that it is primarily laws relating to the Mishkan plus a few 'add-ons'? Or, is there some thematic significance in this transition that could lead us to a deeper understanding of what the book is all about.

In this week's shiur, we attempt to answer this question by taking a closer look at the nature of this transition.

INTRODUCTION

We begin our shiur with a quick overview of Sefer Vayikra to help clarify our opening statement.

The following table summarizes Sefer Vayikra according to its primary topics. As you review this table, note how chapter 18 marks the beginning of this transition (from Mishkan related to non-Mishkan related topics):

PART I - THE MISHKAN AS THE PRIMARY TOPIC

CHAPTER	TOPIC
1-5	MISHKAN/ korbanot of the individual [ndava and chova]
6-7	MISHKAN/ how the kohanim will offer the korbanot
8-10	MISHKAN/ its dedication ceremony [narrative]
11-15	MISHKAN/ "tumah & tahara" [who can enter...]
16	MISHKAN/ "avoda" of the kohen gadol on Yom Kippur
17	MISHKAN/ no korbanot permitted outside the Mishkan

PART II - MISC. TOPICS

CHAPTER	TOPIC
18	GENERAL/ prohibited marriage relationships etc.
19-20	GENERAL/ "kdoshim t'hiyu" [a variety of laws]
21-22	KOHANIM/ special laws regarding the kohanim
23	HOLIDAYS/ focus on the agricultural aspect
24	MISC./ re: Menorah, Shulchan & capital punishment
25	SHMITA/ the seven year shmita & Yovel cycle
26	TOCHACHA/ reward & punishment for keeping the laws
27	VOWS/ "erchin", valuation of pledges

As the above table shows, the first seventeen chapters of Sefer Vayikra form a distinct unit, for that entire section discusses various laws concerning the Mishkan. In contrast to that unit, the remaining ten chapters (18->27) discuss a wide ranges of topics, some Mishkan related; others not. At first glance, it is difficult to find a common theme to this second section. Nonetheless, it is clearly distinct from the first section of the sefer.

To uncover the thematic significance of this division, let's take a closer look at the beginning of chapter 18, i.e. at the very location where this transition begins.

A NEW HEADER

For a start, let's read the opening five psukim of chapter 18, noting how they form a separate 'parshia':

> "And God told Moshe, speak to Bnei Yisrael and tell them: **ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM** - [I am the Lord Your God!] DO NOT act as the Egyptians did, and do not act as the Canaanites... do not follow their laws. [Instead] KEEP MY LAWS... for **ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM**. Keep My laws and My commandments which man must do and live by keeping them for **ANI HASHEM**." (see 18:1-5)

Review these psukim once again, noting how they discuss a very general topic, i.e. how Bnei Yisrael should conduct their lives. They must first reject Egyptian and Canaanite culture and follow God's laws instead. Clearly, these psukim form an introduction to the entire set of mitzvot that will follow.

> [Not only do they 'set the stage' for the laws concerning prohibited marital relationships ["arayot"] that follow in 18:6-23, they also introduce ALL of the mitzvot that follow until the TOCHACHA at the end of the Sefer. To verify this point, compare phrase "chukim & mishpatim" in 26:46 with 18:3-5; compare also them of chapter 26 with 18:24-29!]

We will now show how 18:1-5 serves not only as an introduction to chapter 18, but also forms the introduction to the entire 'second half' of the Sefer Vayikra.

We begin our discussion by paying special attention to a key phrase that is repeated several times in this introduction, and that will appear numerous times again in the second half of the Sefer.

ANI HASHEM

Review 18:1-5 once again, noting the Torah's repeated use of the phrase ANI HASHEM [or alternately ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM]. Not only is this phrase mentioned THREE times in these opening psukim, it is also repeated over FIFTY times from this point in Sefer Vayikra until the end of the sefer. Furthermore, this phrase is included in most every pasuk that introduces or summarizes a key topic!

> [See, for example, 18:30; 19:2,3,4,10,12,14,16,18,30 -32,36-37; 20:24-26; 22:2,3,16,31-33; 23:22,43; 24:22; 25:17,38,55; 26:1-2,13,44-45 & their context (that will keep you busy).]

In contrast, this phrase is found only once in the first half of the Sefer. [See 11:44-45/ note that even here it is used in relation to the laws of kosher animals, which themselves are only tangentially related to the Mishkan.]

This emphasis upon the phrase of ANI HASHEM may provide us with a clue toward understanding the overall theme of the second half of the sefer.

LIMITATION OR EMANATION

At first glance, it seems rather absurd that when Sefer Vayikra describes the laws concerning the "korbanot" [sacrifices] that were offered in the Mishkan - the site where God's SHCHINA is present - the phrase ANI HASHEM [lit. I am God] is barely mentioned; yet when it discusses various laws which must be kept OUTSIDE the Mishkan, the phrase is emphasized over and over again! Considering that the phrase "ANI HASHEM" serves as a reminder that we stand before God, we would certainly expect to find it mentioned more often in relation to the Mishkan!

One could suggest that the Torah wishes to emphasize precisely the opposite! The Torah may fear that this intense level of "kedusha" caused by God's Presence in the Mishkan may lead to the misconception that God's Presence is LIMITED to the Mishkan! Therefore, as it describes the laws of daily life that Am Yisrael must keep when they are outside the Mishkan, the repetition of the phrase "ani Hashem" becomes quite meaningful.

> [We are all too familiar with the consequences of this 'mistaken conclusion', i.e. where one's spiritual behavior is meticulous while visiting God's residence (be it the Mishkan, or a synagogue), in contrast to the more secular nature of his behavior once he leaves its environs.]

The very structure of Sefer Vayikra (i.e. its two halves, as noted above) may come to counter this misconception - for it emphasizes that the Mishkan does not LIMIT the "shechina" to its confines, rather, it serves as conduit to allow God's presence to EMANATE. Ideally, man's experience in the Mishkan should leave a profound effect on his way of life outside the Mishkan. As we will soon explain, this concept relates to the very essence of KEDUSHA.

From a thematic perspective, one could apply this explanation to the two halves of Sefer Vayikra. Even though the primary topic of Sefer Vayikra may be the laws relating to the Mishkan, the second half of the sefer intentionally includes numerous mitzvot that serve as an example of how we TRANSLATE the intense level of SHCHINA found in the Mishkan into the daily walks of life.

In the Mishkan itself, the concept of "ani Hashem" is so clear, that there is no need for a constant reminder. However, outside its confines, man must be constantly reminded that God's Presence remains everywhere.

[This concept of the Mishkan serving as a funnel to bring the 'shechina' from heaven to a fountain-like source on earth from which it can emanate to all mankind is reflected in the prophecies of Zecharya (see 14:8-9) and Yeshayahu (see 2:1-5).]

A THEMATIC PROGRESSION

To better appreciate the meaning of these two sections, it is helpful to first review our earlier observations regarding Sefer Vayikra (as we discussed in our introductory shiur).

In contrast to the other books of Chumash that are 'narrative based' (i.e. they begin and end with a story), Sefer Vayikra is 'commandment based' (i.e. it contains a collection of various mitzvot which God commanded Moshe and Aharon to teach Bnei Yisrael). Therefore, the progression of parshiot in the sefer is thematic as opposed chronological.

We also explained that the sefer, referred to by Chazal as TORAT KOHANIM, begins as an 'instruction manual' for the Mishkan. Even though we expected that Sefer Vayikra would deal exclusively with Mishkan related commandments, as was the case in the first seventeen chapters, the second half introduces a wide range of mitzvot which must be kept outside the Mikdash for they reflect how God's Presence in the Mishkan should affect our behavior in all aspects of life.

This can explain the internal progression of parshiot as well. For example, in chapter 18 we are told how one should not act, while in chapter 19 we are instructed how one SHOULD ACT, i.e. Parshat K'DOSHIM T'HIYU - acting in a sanctified manner in all walks of life.

KEDUSHA

This concept, i.e. SETTING ASIDE one special site (e.g. the Mishkan) where God's Presence is more intense - IN ORDER to bring sanctity to all surrounding areas, can be understand as the most basic concept of KEDUSHA.

For example, we can explain the "kedusha" of SHABBAT in a very similar manner, i.e. we set aside one day of the week, sanctifying it with an increased level of God's "shechina"- in order to elevate the spiritual level of each day of the week - for our experience on shabbat will affect our behavior on each weekday (as we anticipate shabbat). [See Ramban on Shmot 12:1 in his explanation of KIDUSH ha'CHODESH!]

One can explain the KEDUSHA on AM YISRAEL in a similar manner, i.e. God SET ASIDE a special nation (see Sefer Breishit), sanctifying it with special mitzvot (see Sefer Shmot) - IN ORDER to deliver God's message of sanctity to all mankind (see Devarim 4:5-8).

Note as well how these three examples, Mishkan, Shabbat, and Am Yisrael - reflect the three basic categories of KEDUSHA in the realms of space, time, and matter:

kedushat MAKOM (place) - the Mishkan
kedushat ZMAN (time) - Shabbat, &
kedushat ADAM (man) - Am Yisrael.

A THEME FOR SEFER VAYIKRA

With this background, we can suggest a common theme for all the mitzvot in the second half of the sefer, as well as their relationship to the first half of the sefer. Note how these final ten chapters of Vayikra can be divided according to these three basic realms of "kedusha" (sanctity or holiness):

1) KEDUSHAT ADAM - man / chapters 18->22
e.g. kedushat Am Yisrael and/or kohanim

2) KEDUSHAT ZMAN - time / chapter 23
e.g. shabbat and "moadim" (holidays)

3) KEDUSHAT MAKOM - place or land / chapters 24-26
e.g. the laws of SHMITA in the land of Israel

However, "kedusha" can also be considered the primary theme of the first half of Sefer Vayikra as well, for the Mishkan itself is also referred to as a MIKDASH. The word "mikdash" evolves from the same shoresh - k.d.sh. [as in "kedusha"], implying the setting aside of something for a special purpose (see Breishit 2:3, 38:21 and Shmot 13:1!) for a divine purpose. The Mikdash is a special sanctuary set aside for the worship of God.

Likewise, in "kedushat adam", Am Yisrael is set aside to serve God; so too the kohanim etc. In "kedushat zman", "shabbat" and the "moadim" are set aside from the other days of the week for a divine purpose. In "kedushat makom", the land of Israel is set aside from all others as God's special land.

Based on this analysis, we can suggest an overall theme for Sefer Vayikra. Recall that at Har Sinai, before receiving the Torah, Bnei Yisrael entered a covenant to accept God's laws in order to become a "mamlechet kohanim v'GOY KADOSH" (see Shmot 19:4-6). Sefer Vayikra explains HOW Bnei Yisrael become this "goy kadosh" [holy nation], not only by worshiping God in the MISHKAN, but also by keeping the daily mitzvot of kedushat ADAM, ZMAN, & MAKOM - the constant reminders of God's Presence - as emphasized by the phrase: ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM - in their daily lives.

TORAT KOHANIM

This observation can help us appreciate the name that Chazal use to describe Sefer Vayikra - TORAT KOHANIM [Laws for Priests]. Based on our original analysis this name would appear to be a bit inaccurate, for Sefer Vayikra includes many laws that have nothing to do with Kohanim and/or the Mishkan. However, based on this deeper theme in second half of Sefer Vayikra, the word 'KOHANIM' in the name TORAT KOHANIM may refer not only to the KOHANIM who work in the Mishkan, but also to the entire nation of Israel who serve as a MAMALECHET KOHANIM v'GOY KADOSH - a nation of priests in service of God - working towards bringing God's Name to all mankind.

This recognition of ANI HASHEM, experienced at an intense level when one visits the Mishkan, must be internalized to affect one's conduct, even outside the Mishkan, and in all walks of life.

In our shiur on Parshat Kedoshim, we will explain how this distinction can enhance our understanding of chapter 19 and its connection to the Ten Commandments. Till then,

shabbat shalom,
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN
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TUMAH OF THE LAND

A. Read 18:24-30, the concluding psukim of chapter 18. Do these psukim simply summarize the chapter or serve as a continuation of the introductory nature of 18:1-5?

Where else do we find a concept of being banished from a land in punishment for sinful behavior? (See Vayikra 18:28/ See also Ramban!! - be careful, it's very "tzioni")

Relate this to the situation in Gan Eden and Vayikra 26:3-13.

Based on your answer, why do you think that the Midrash equates Eretz Yisrael with Gan Eden? Relate also to Vayikra 18:5, Devarim 30:15-20 and Mishlei 3:18.]

In the above mentioned psukim we also find a concept of "tumah" (18:24-28). In what manner is this concept of TUMAH different that the laws of TUMAH found thus far in Sefer Vayikra?

In what manner is it similar?

B. AVODAT KOHEN GADOL ON YOM KIPPUR

It is interesting to note that on Yom Kippur shacharit we read Vayikra chapter 16, while at mincha we read Vayikra chapter 18. Now the reason why we read chapter 16 is simple, for it details the special AVODAH of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur in the Bet ha'Mikdash. However, why do read specifically chapter 18 for mincha? After the prohibition of "arayot" (the primary topic) contains no obvious connection to Yom Kippur?

Some explain that this custom is simply for convenience; i.e. as we may be too tired to roll the 'sefer' to another location, we simply read a chapter nearby to what we read in the morning. However, based on the above shiur, we can offer a more significant explanation.

As we explained above, chapter 16 constitutes the climax of the first half of Sefer Vayikra for on Yom Kippur, as the "kohen gadol" enters the "kodesh ha'kdoshim" on the "shabbat shabbaton", Am Yisrael ascends to the highest level in all three realms of "kedusha":

1) "kedushat adam" - kohen gadol
2) "kedushat makom" - kodesh k'doshim
3) "kedushat zman" - shabbat shabbaton

However, it is just as important to remind ourselves that these concentrated levels of "kedusha" must be incorporated into daily life. As Yom Kippur draws to its close, or possibly its true climax, we must remind ourselves of this hashkafic message of the second half of Sefer Vayikra. This may be the reason why Chazal saw it appropriate that we read this pivotal chapter (18:1-30) at Mincha time, for Yom Kippur marks not only the culmination of the year which has passed, but also sets us in the proper direction for the new year which is about to begin.